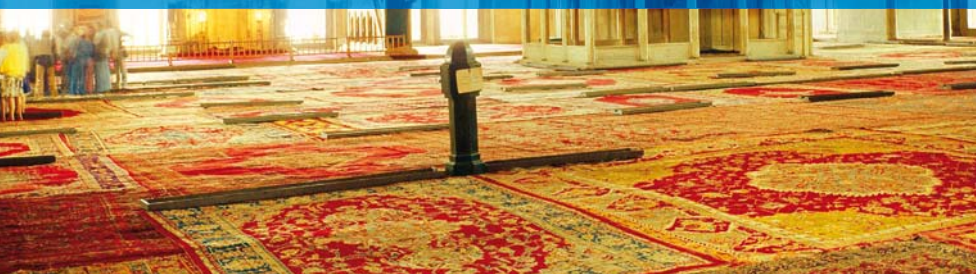
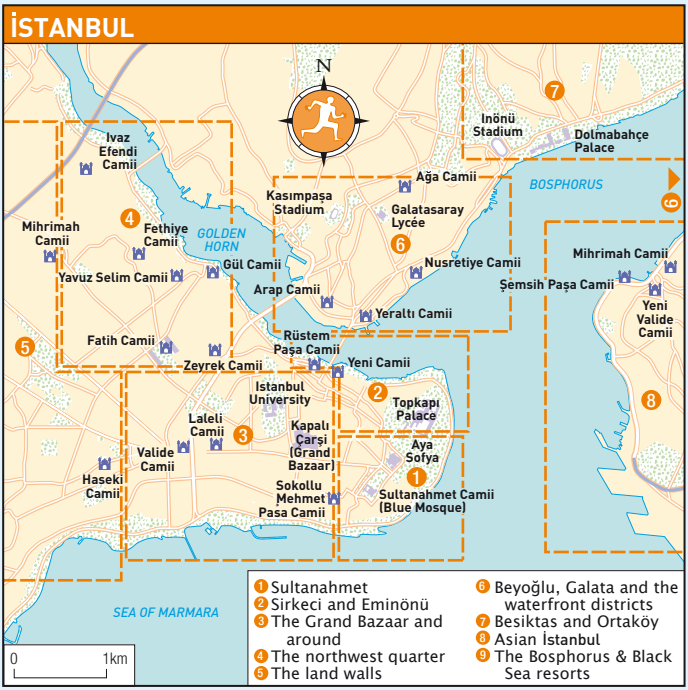
ROUGH GUIDES

# THE ROUGH GUIDE to Istanbul



VISIT…




# About this book

**Rough Guides** are designed to be good to read and easy to use. The book is divided into the following sections and you should be able to find whatever you need in one of them.

The introductory **colour section** is designed to give you a feel for İstanbul, suggesting when to go and what not to miss, and includes a full list of **contents**. Then comes **basics**, for pre-departure information and other practicalities.

The **city** chapters cover each area of İstanbul in depth, giving comprehensive accounts of all the attractions, while the **listings** section gives you the lowdown on accommodation, eating, shopping and more. The **beyond the city** chapters describe excursions further afield.

**Contexts** fills you in on history, music, film and books, while individual **colour sections** introduce Ottoman architecture and eating out, and **language** gives you an extensive menu reader and enough Turkish to get by.

The book concludes with all the **small print**, including details of how to send in updates and corrections, and a comprehensive **index**.

## This first edition published July 2009.

The publishers and authors have done their best to ensure the accuracy and currency of all the information in *The Rough Guide to İstanbul*, however, they can accept no responsibility for any loss, injury or inconvenience sustained by any traveller as a result of information or advice contained in the guide.

ISBN 978-1-84836-068-6
9 781848 360686 51999
US$19.99 CAN$22.99

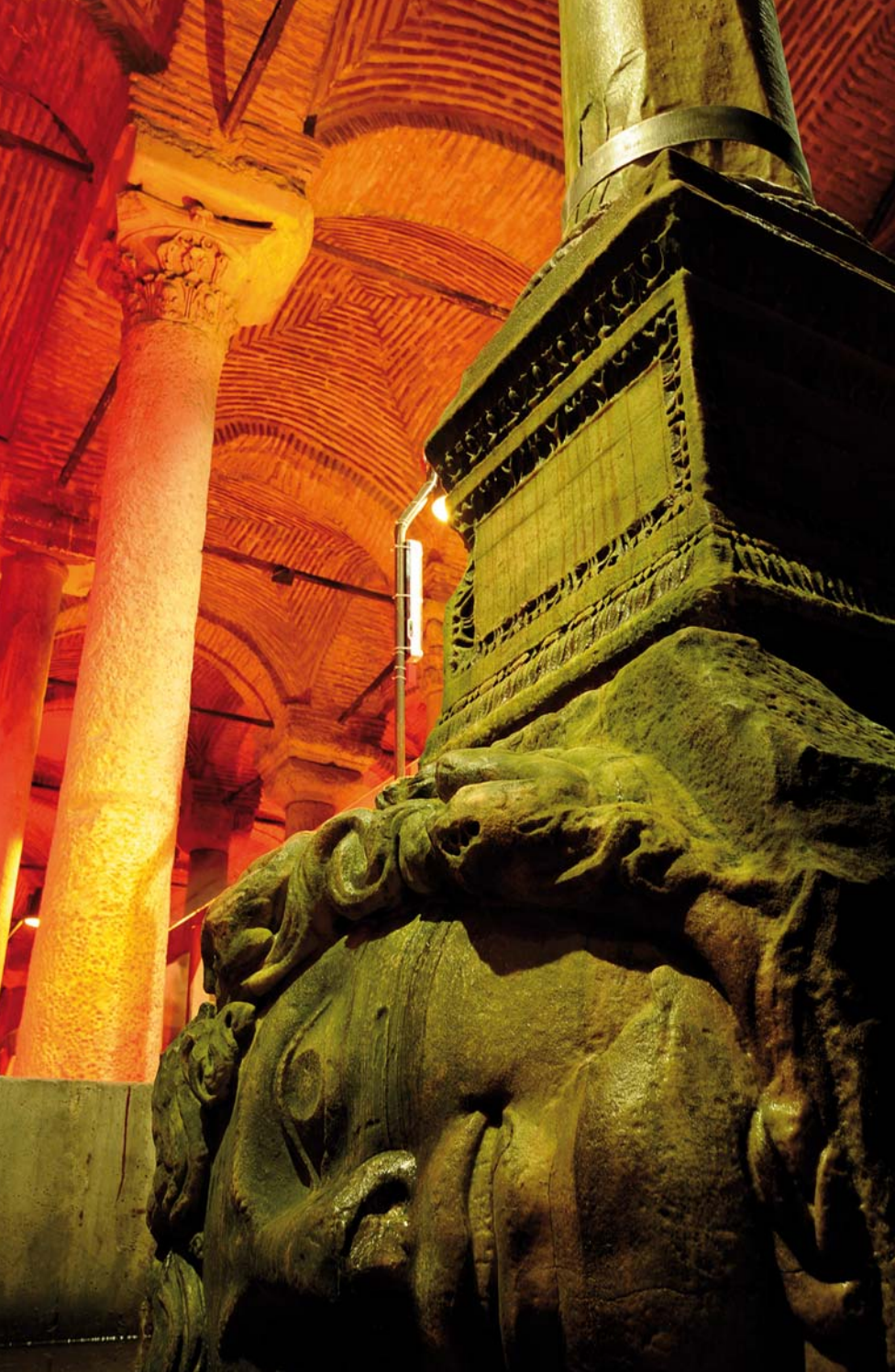
The **Rough Guide** to

# İstanbul

written and researched by

**Terry Richardson**

www.roughguides.com



# Contents




## Colour section 1

Introduction ..... 4
What to see..... 5
When to go ..... 8
Things not to miss ..... 10

## Basics 17

Getting there..... 19
Red tape and visas ..... 24
Information and maps..... 25
Arrival ..... 27
City transport..... 29
Costs, money and banks ..... 35
Mail, phones and the internet... 37
The media..... 39
Opening hours and public holidays ..... 41
Festivals and cultural events.... 43
Travel essentials ..... 45

## Guide 51

1 Sultanahmet..... 53
2 Sirkeci, Eminönü and Tahtakale..... 80
3 The Grand Bazaar and around..... 88
4 The northwest quarter..... 101
5 The land walls..... 113
6 Beyoğlu, Taksim and the waterfront districts..... 123
7 Beşiktaş and Ortaköy..... 145
8 Asian İstanbul ..... 152
9 The Bosphorus and the Black Sea resorts..... 160

## Listings 173

10 Accommodation..... 175
11 Eating..... 186
12 Nightlife..... 204
13 The Arts ..... 215
14 Gay and lesbian İstanbul... 222
15 Shopping ..... 225
16 Sport and activities ..... 237
17 Kids' İstanbul ..... 243

## Out of the City 247

18 The Princes' and Marmara islands ..... 249
19 İznik and Termal ..... 259
20 Bursa and Uludağ ..... 267
21 Çanakkale, Troy and Gallipoli..... 283
22 Edirne ..... 298

## Contexts 309

## Language 349

## Small print & Index 365

**Ottoman art and architecture** colour section following p.112

**Eating out** colour section following p.240

**Colour maps** following p.376



◀◀ Swimming in the Bosphorus ◀ Yerebatan Sarnıçı

# Introduction to Istanbul

**İstanbul is unique. The only city in the world to straddle two continents and to have played capital to consecutive Christian and Islamic empires, its location, at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, has helped it shape the region's history for over 2500 years. Built, like its original inspiration, Rome, on seven hills, the city (in its former guise of Constantinople) was the centre of the Byzantine Christian world from the fourth to the fifteenth centuries AD – the formidable six-kilometre-long land walls, the imposing bulk of the church of Aya Sofya, and the delicate mosaics and frescoes in the Kariye Museum are just some of the wonderful remnants from this period. The Ottomans, who famously conquered the city in 1453, have left an even more impressive legacy, and it is the domes and minarets of their many mosques that dominate the skyline of the Old City, endowing it with the "oriental" exoticism that so enthrals Western visitors.**

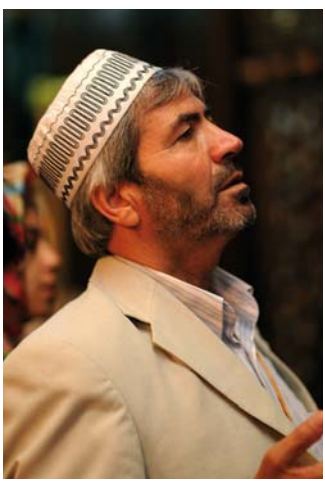
With a **population** estimated at anything up to 25 million, İstanbul is a metropolis going on megalopolis, a teeming, vibrant urban centre that can make other European cities seem dull in comparison – not least because it has a far younger age-profile than any EU city. A city this size may seem an anomaly in a country where half the populace still work the fields in remote villages, but in many ways booming İstanbul – its inhabitants comprising migrants from every corner of the land – is Turkey. It may have been stripped of its capital status back in 1923, but İstanbul exerts a powerful, almost

St Stephen of the Bulgars in the northwest quarter

mystical hold on the psyche of the nation, and remains, in the minds of all Turks, the country's foremost city, its cultural, economic and intellectual heart.

No one could deny that İstanbul has its concerns. A city whose population has increased at least twelvefold since the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923 is bound to have suffered from such **rapid urban growth**. Traffic congestion, pollution, rising crime rates and water shortages are just some of the "human" problems successive İstanbul mayors have had to deal with.

Despite the problems, however, there's a buzz and confidence to İstanbul that makes everything and anything seem possible. **Foreign investment** has poured in, particularly from the Gulf States, once-rampant inflation is down to single digits, tourism is booming and the city has become a major conference and congress centre. The İstanbul Biennial is an established arts festival of worldwide importance, there are vibrant music and film festivals – and, in 2010, the city will be a **European Capital of Culture**. It's little wonder support for EU accession is dropping. İstanbullus know their vital metropolis can, if necessary, stand alone and take full advantage of its unique position between Christian Europe and the Muslim Middle East.



Worshipper at Eyüp Camii

# What to see

For most visitors, İstanbul is a city of two halves: the **Old City**, superbly sited on a triangular peninsular pointing across the Bosphorus towards Asia, and the loosely defined district of **Beyoğlu**, on the

## The Bosphorus

Geographically, historically and strategically, the Bosporus, the thirty-kilometre-long strait connecting the Black Sea with the Aegean (via the Sea of Marmara and the Dardanelles) and dividing Europe from Asia, is one of the world's crucial waterways. With a medley of tankers, ferries and fishing boats weaving their way up, down or across its glittering blue waters, it is also one of its most visually stunning, best appreciated from the waterfront terrace of the İstanbul Modern or one of the many fish restaurants that dot its shores.

The river derives its name ("Ford of the Cow") from a Greek myth in which, as retribution for Zeus seducing Io, Hera, Zeus' jealous wife, turns the unfortunate Io into a cow. Pursued by an angry horsefly, Io swims the straits to flee her tormentor. Were Io to attempt her escape today, she'd most likely be mown down by one of the eighty thousand or so ships that pass through each year, a consequence of the 1936 Montreaux Convention, in which Turkey was bound to allow free passage, despite the obvious dangers of so much shipping using such a narrow strait (a mere 700m at its narrowest). Many of these vessels are ferries, whisking commuters from their homes in Asia to their workplace in Europe, but a fifth of them are tankers. In ancient times, ships laden with Scythian grain from the Black Sea hinterland sailed through en route to the bread-hungry citizens of Pericles' Athens. Today, Russian tankers filled with oil and liquefied gas ply the same route into the Mediterranean and fuel-starved Europe, helping make the Bosphorus the second busiest waterway in the world.

other side of the Golden Horn. Most of the major sights are in the former, in a remarkably compact area, easily explored on foot. At its heart is the historic district of **Sultanahmet**, an area of twisting, cobbled lanes, overhung by quaint old wooden houses, and studded with landmark buildings from the powerful Byzantine and Ottoman empires: the **Aya Sofya**, the **Hippodrome**, **Topkapı Palace** and the **Blue Mosque**.

West of Sultanahmet, the university district of **Beyazit** is dominated by the **Grand Bazaar**, an exotic "shopping centre" that has been doing business for over five hundred years, whilst to the north, nudging up to the waters of the Golden Horn, lie bustling **Sirkeci** and **Eminönü**, the former famous for its grandiloquent station, eastern terminus of the *Orient Express*, the latter for the olfactory delights of the Ottoman-era Mısır Çarşısı or **Spice Bazaar**.

The atmospheric **northwest quarter** boasts the wonderful Byzantine church of St Saviour in the Chora, now the **Kariye Museum** and, a little beyond it, the mighty **land walls** of Theodosius. It's in the backstreets here, particularly around the ultra-orthodox **Fatih** district, where visitors will find the "traditional" İstanbul of young women garbed in headscarves and

skull-capped men sipping sweet black tea whilst waiting for the next call to prayer.

Across the Golden Horn lies the old "European" quarter of **Beyoğlu**, an area of graceful nineteenth-century apartment blocks that has become the nerve centre of a booming arts, cultural and nightlife scene, focused on İstanbul's major shopping street, **İstiklal Caddesi**, and epitomized by the waterfront **İstanbul Modern** gallery and a rash of trendy rooftop bars. Here İstanbul girls in skimpy tops and miniskirts rifle through fashion rails whilst well-heeled socialites pick over exorbitantly priced sushi.

Recent improvements in the transport infrastructure, notably the tram and funicular railway, mean it's relatively quick and easy to get from one sight-seeing area to another – even the far-flung sites in **Asian İstanbul** are well linked to the Old City and Beyoğlu by ferry. The ferry ride alone makes a trip across worthwhile, with the nightlife of **Kadıköy** and the Ottoman architecture of **Üsküdar** the major attractions.

Beyond the domes and minarets of the Old City, and the high-rise office blocks of the commercial districts, lies the blue, ship-filled streak of the **Bosphorus**. North of the city centre, the river is lined on either side with swish village-cum-suburbs; these can be explored by bus but are best seen from the decks of the **Bosphorus Cruise**, which zigzags between Europe and Asia as it heads up the strait to the pretty fishing village of Anadolu Kavagı.

▶ Café culture

There's plenty to see **outside the city**, too. South of İstanbul, out in the Sea of Marmara, the charming **Princes' Islands**, with their horse-drawn carriages, *fin-de-siècle* wooden villas, pine forests and beaches, have long provided a summer retreat from the bustle of the city – and are cheap and easy to reach by ferry. **Edirne**, a former Ottoman capital, is famed for the marvellous Selimiye Camii, one of the world's most beautiful mosques, and its oil-wrestling festival. Edirne is best accessed by bus, but you can use

## Station to station: Sirkeci and Haydarpaşa

Immortalized in Graham Greene's *Stamboul Train* and Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express*, the train that linked Paris and Vienna with İstanbul became a metaphor for style, opulence and, of course, intrigue. The eastern terminus for the *Orient Express* was Sirkeci station, opened with great fanfare in 1888, right in the heart of imperial İstanbul. Designed by Prussian architect August Jachmund, it was an oriental fantasy, with a Parisian-style dome, minaret-like turrets and Moghul-influenced windows.

The *Orient Express* connected Europe with the capital of the Ottoman Empire, but across the Bosphorus in Asia another temple to travel would soon arise: Haydarpaşa. Completed in 1908, this German-built station, a monumental, mock-castle structure with stunning views back across the water to the domes and minarets of the Old City, is even more splendid than Sirkeci. The station was part of imperialist Germany's great scheme to link Berlin and the Persian Gulf by rail – a grand plan that never quite reached fruition. Even today, though, it's still possible to alight in Sirkeci, hop on a ferry for the short but dramatic ride across the Bosphorus to Hayadarpaşa, and then board a train across Anatolia bound for Aleppo in Syria.

The Golden Age of travel may be long gone, but these two great stations, both likely to be sidelined by a massive transport regeneration scheme, retain the spirit of a more glamorous era.

either bus, or a combination of bus and high-speed ferry, to get to legendary **Troy**, the World War I battlefields of **Gallipoli**, "Green" **Bursa**, draped across the slopes of towering Uludağ, or the laidback, rural retreat that is lakeside **İznik**.

# When to go

İstanbul and its environs have a relatively damp **climate**, with hot, humid summers and cool, rainy winters with occasional snowfalls. The city is at its best in May and June, then again in September and October, months that offer the perfect combination of dry, warm (but not overly hot) weather and long daylight hours

The "Evil Eye", the Grand Bazaar

▶ Fishing on the Bosphorus

and are thus the busiest, with accommodation at a premium and prices at their highest. July and August can be sweltering in the daytime, especially from midday to mid-afternoon, though by way of compensation the night-time dining and drinking at the city's numerous pavement and rooftop bars, cafés and restaurants is a delight. On the downside, many better-off Istanbullus decamp to the Aegean or Mediterranean resorts for the duration, as – consequently – do some of the city's best nightclubs. In January, February and even into March, it can be very chilly, with winds whipping down the Bosphorus from the Black Sea and fog rolling in from both the strait and the Sea of Marmara, though periods of bright, sunny weather punctuate the grey, and the city takes on an ethereal beauty in the snow.

It's also good to be aware of the two major **religious holidays**, the *Şeker* and *Kurban bayrams* (see p.43), when government offices, banks and some shops close and travelling can be more difficult than usual. The month-long *Ramazan* fast also affects the mood of the city (see p.43).

## Climate

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Average temperature** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| (°C) | 6 | 6 | 8 | 12 | 17 | 22 | 24 | 24 | 20 | 16 | 11 | 8 |
| (°F) | 43 | 43 | 46 | 54 | 63 | 72 | 75 | 75 | 68 | 61 | 52 | 46 |
| **Average hours of sunshine** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2 | 3 | 4.5 | 6 | 8 | 10 | 10.5 | 9.5 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| **Average number of rainy days** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 17 | 15 | 13 | 11.5 | 7.5 | 6.5 | 4 | 5.5 | 7 | 11.5 | 13.5 | 17 |

# 21 things not to miss

*It's not possible to see everything that İstanbul has to offer in one trip – and we don't suggest you try. What follows is a selection of the city's highlights: spectacular architecture, outstanding museums and culinary treats. They're arranged in no particular order in five colour-coded categories, which you can browse to find the very best things to see and experience. All highlights have a page reference to take you straight to where you can find out more.*

**01 Aya Sofya** Page **53** • The most important Byzantine building in the world – as the Hagia Sophia or "Church of the Divine Wisdom", it was the heart of eastern Christendom for close on a millennia.

**02 İstanbul Modern** Page 141 • İstanbul's answer to the Tate Modern may not be quite as grand as its London forerunner, but it's cool nonetheless – and the Bosphorus-front setting beats the Thames hands down.

**03 Dessert time** Page 192 • Join the sweet-toothed Turks and tuck into some *lokum* (Turkish Delight) with real Turkish coffee, preferably in an atmospheric location such as the Art Nouveau *Markiz* patisserie.

**04 The Galata Tower** Page 138 • Once part of the defence system of the Genoese colony of Galata, the view from the tower's gallery across the Golden Horn to the Old City is breathtaking.

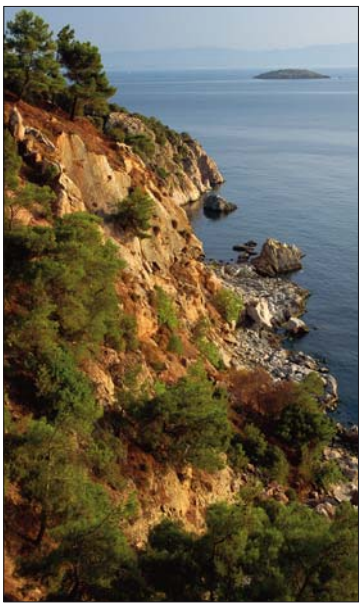
**05 Kariye Museum** Page 107 • Formerly the fourteenth-century church of St Saviour in the Chora, this fine museum contains some of the best Byzantine mosaics and frescoes in existence.

**06 Bosphorus Cruise** Page 160 • İstanbul's fabulous skyline is seen at its best from the water, and a boat ride up the historic, continent-dividing Bosphorus strait is unmissable – there's even time for a fish lunch in a charming village on the Asian Shore.

**07 Grand Bazaar** Page 89 • Boasting over four thousand shops, this Ottoman-era wonder is the largest covered bazaar in the world. Whether you're after a Turkish carpet or a fake Luis Vuitton bag, you'll find it here.

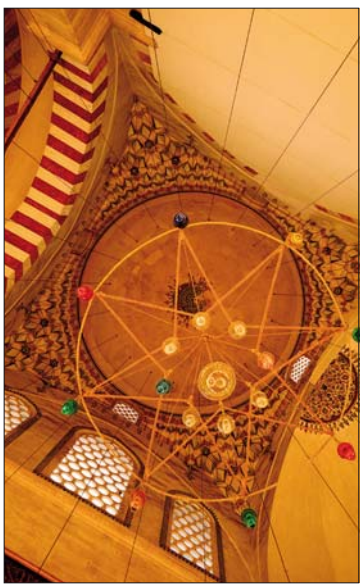
**08 Yerebatan Sarnıçı** Page 70 • It's hard to believe that something so prosaic as an underground cistern could be so fascinating, but combine Roman engineering and craftsmanship with contemporary lighting and you get one of the city's most impressive remains.

**09 Blue Mosque** Page 72 • The imposing bulk of the Blue Mosque dominates the İstanbul skyline. With its cascading domes and cylindrical minarets, this major Ottoman monument conforms perfectly to the Western stereotype of how a mosque should look.



**10 The Princes' Islands** Page 249 • Escape the hubbub of the city for a quiet seaside retreat. Büyük Ada (pictured) is the largest of these charming islands, rising from the Sea of Marmara just an hour's ferry ride from İstanbul.

**11 Süleymaniye Camii** Page 95 • If you're only planning on visiting one mosque, make it this one. Superbly situated on a hill above the Old City and the Golden Horn, this mosque complex combines sanctity and architectural merit in equal measure.



**12 Nightlife** Page **209** • The Beyoğlu area of the city is justly famed for its bars, live music venues and clubs, nowhere more so than trendy "It turns İstanbul on" *Babylon*.

**13 Topkapı Palace** Page **57** • The symbolic and political centre of an empire that once stretched from the Balkans to Arabia and the Russian Steppes to North Africa, the Topkapı Palace was the home of the mysterious Harem.

**14 Hippodrome** Page **71** • The arena of first the Roman, then the Byzantine city, the Hippodrome is now an open park area still boasting the Egyptian Obelisk, once a marker around which charioteers raced.

**16 Troy** Page **288** • Thanks to Homer and Hollywood, Troy, represented here by the replica wooden horse that guards the entrance to the ancient remains, is one of the most famous sites in the world.

**15 Football** Page **238** • The beautiful game is a religion in Turkey, and the nation's soccer landscape is dominated by İstanbul's "Big Three": Beşiktaş, Fenerbahçe and Galatasaray.

**17 Dolmabahçe Palace** Page **147** • İstanbul's answer to Versailles, the late-Ottoman excess that is the Dolmabahçe Palace dominates the Bosphorus waterfront across the Golden Horn in Beşiktaş.

**18 Meyhane culture** See ***Eating out* colour section** • No visit to İstanbul is complete without a no-holds night out at a lively *meyhane* (tavern), where eating (usually fish) often plays second fiddle to drinking, live gypsy music and impromptu dancing.

**19 Visiting a hamam** Page **241** • The historic *hamams* of İstanbul are architectural treasures in their own right, and provide a wonderfully relaxing (and cleansing) way to round off a day's sightseeing.

**20 The Archeology Museum** Page **68** • Contains a wonderful collection of well-displayed objects from the city and its former Ottoman domains, housed in an imposing, purpose-built late nineteenth-century building.

**21 Selimiye Camii, Edirne** Page **302** • The masterwork of the greatest Ottoman architect, Mimar Sinan, the dome of this sixteenth-century mosque appears to float effortlessly above the faithful praying below.

# Basics

# Basics

Getting there ..... 19

Red tape and visas ..... 24

Information and maps ..... 25

Arrival ..... 27

City transport ..... 29

Costs, money and banks ..... 35

Mail, phones and the internet ..... 37

The media ..... 39

Opening hours and public holidays ..... 41

Festivals and cultural events ..... 43

Travel essentials ..... 45

# Getting there

**Flights to İstanbul from the UK and Ireland take between three and a little over four hours depending on your starting and ending points. Only two carriers fly direct from the US and Canada (down to one in winter), so most North Americans reach İstanbul via a European gateway airport. Many travellers from Australia and New Zealand use a Round-the-World (RTW) ticket that includes the city, but there are direct flights from South Africa. Note that there are now two international airports in İstanbul (see p.27).**

Making an early booking, being flexible and (especially if flying from the US) avoiding weekend flights are the keys to getting the best deal regardless of season. There's not necessarily a big difference in price between summer and winter, though as most people tend to visit İstanbul in the warmer months (April–Oct), seat demand is consequently higher and prices tend to jump alarmingly unless you book very early. Christmas and New Year, Easter and other school holidays, not to mention Turkish national and religious holidays, also see hikes in seat prices.

Travelling overland by train or car from Britain or elsewhere in Europe is still feasible, but it will take far longer than flying and almost certainly cost more.

## Flights from the UK and Ireland

The only **budget airline** flying to İstanbul is easyJet, with one-way flights in winter (Nov–March) from Gatwick and Luton from as low as £30, rising up to £125 for late, summer-season bookings. A possible alternative is to **fly to Germany** with Ryanair or easyJet, then connect with a German or Turkish charter flying into İstanbul, such as German Wings, Sunexpress and Condor, although these tickets are usually both non-exchangeable and either non-, or only partially, refundable.

**Scheduled flights**, particularly if you book early and/or look out for promotional offers, can be very good value and offer superior in-flight service. They have longer ticket validities (30, 60, 90 or even 180 days), involve fewer or (occasionally) none of the typical restrictions applicable to charters, and often leave at more sociable hours. Note, too, that if you are travelling with children (under 12), scheduled airlines, unlike budget ones, usually give a generous discount. However, many of the cheaper, shorter-duration fares have advance-purchase and/or minimum-stay requirements, and severe restrictions on date changes or refunds. The widest choice of scheduled flights from the UK is with the Turkish national carrier, Turkish Airways (THY). THY links London Heathrow with İstanbul three times daily, and there are once-daily flights from Manchester to İstanbul. Thirty-day fares don't vary much across the year: London to İstanbul costs £210–400 depending on how far in advance you book; fares from Manchester are around £20 higher. British Airways has three daily services from London Heathrow to İstanbul (from around £215 in July & Aug). Flights from Manchester (3 daily) cost from £300 in July and August but entail a flight to Gatwick, followed by a coach transfer to Heathrow.

It's also worth considering **indirect flights** with other European airlines. These may well be cheaper than direct flights, and on the likes of Swiss, Air France or Lufthansa (which serves several Turkish airports direct from Germany), in-flight service may be superior.

From Belfast, there are year-round daily scheduled services with British Airways, involving a stop in London or Manchester, but prices are high (in excess of £330 in July & Aug). From Dublin, you'll do better on one-stop itineraries with Air France or KLM, but these are also expensive (around €600 in July & Aug). Probably the cheapest option is to use

## Six steps to a better kind of travel

At Rough Guides we are passionately committed to travel. We feel strongly that only through travelling do we truly come to understand the world we live in and the people we share it with – plus tourism has brought a great deal of benefit to developing economies around the world over the last few decades. But the extraordinary growth in tourism has also damaged some places irreparably, and of course climate change is exacerbated by most forms of transport, especially flying. This means that now more than ever it's important to travel thoughtfully and responsibly, with respect for the cultures you're visiting – not only to derive the most benefit from your trip but also in order to preserve the best bits of the planet for everyone to enjoy. At Rough Guides we feel there are six main areas in which you can make a difference:

- Consider what you're contributing to the local economy, and indeed how much the services you use do the same, whether it's through employing local workers and guides or sourcing locally grown produce and local services.
- Consider the environment on holiday as well as at home. Water is scarce in many developing destinations, and the biodiversity of local flora and fauna can be adversely affected by tourism. Patronise businesses that take account of this rather than those that trash the local environment for short-term gain.
- Give thought to how often you fly and what you can do to redress any harm that your trips create. Reduce the amount you travel by air; avoid short hops by air and more harmful night flights.
- Consider alternatives to flying, travelling instead by bus, train, boat and even by bike or on foot where possible. Take time to enjoy the journey itself as well as your final destination.
- Think about making all the trips you take "climate neutral" via a reputable carbon offset scheme. All Rough Guide flights are offset, and every year we donate money to a variety of charities devoted to combating the effects of climate change.
- Travel with a purpose, not just to tick off experiences. Consider spending longer in a place, and really getting to know it and its people – you'll find it much more rewarding than dashing from place to place

a budget carrier from either Dublin or Belfast into Gatwick, then by easyJet onto İstanbul.

## Flights from North America

The cheapest way to reach İstanbul from North America is to pick up a bargain trans-atlantic fare to Europe, then arrange the final İstanbul-bound leg of the journey yourself; onward flights from the UK are detailed on p.19.

Turkish Airways (THY) is the only carrier flying direct year-round **from the US**, with daily flights from New York (JFK), and four weekly out of Chicago. There are half a dozen feeder flights to these hubs on its partner, American Airlines, from several major cities, including San Francisco and Miami. Delta Airlines is the only other airline offering a direct service (April–Oct), from New York to İstanbul, while United Airlines generally has the cheapest stopping fares via Frankfurt. European carriers, such as British Airways, Air France, KLM, Alitalia and Swiss, route through **European hubs** such as London, Paris, Frankfurt, Milan and Zürich, with the best choice probably being Lufthansa via Frankfurt.

One-month **fares** out of New York start from US$865 in winter and from US$1815 in peak season for a direct flight with THY. For Chicago, it costs from US$950 in winter but from only US$1100 in summer. From San Francisco, winter fares start at US$1165, with the cheapest summer fares only a fraction higher.

There are no direct flights **from Canada** to Turkey, but several airlines fly to İstanbul via major European hubs. Winter fares from **Montréal** start at CAN$1100 and summer ones at CAN$1380, on British Airways via London.

## Flights from Australia, New Zealand and South Africa

There are no direct flights **from Australia or New Zealand** to Turkey. However, several weekly scheduled flights will get you there after either a plane change or short layover in the airline's hub city – typically Bahrain, Bangkok, Singapore or Milan – before the final leg of the journey. A marginally less expensive, but far more time-consuming strategy would involve taking a flight to London and then proceeding from there with, say, easyJet. The situation is rather better **from South Africa**, with a choice of direct or indirect flights.

Flights booked directly through the airlines tend to be more expensive than those bought from discount agents, who will have the latest information on limited specials offered throughout the year. **Round-the-World (RTW) tickets** including Turkey use combinations of airlines, and could be worth considering for a long trip taking in many destinations; generally, some free stopovers are allowed, with fares starting at AUS$2500.

Two-stop itineraries from Sydney are around AUS$1850 in low season to AUS$2700 high season, with Malaysian or Singapore airlines. **From Auckland**, Lufthansa flies to İstanbul for NZ$2300 year-round.

Turkish Airlines have thrice weekly flights **from Johannesburg** to İstanbul with starting prices as low as ZAR6800 – early booking rather than time of year the most important criteria for bagging a cheap seat. There are also (more expensive) flights **from Cape Town**, also three times a week. South Africa Airways flies daily via Frankfurt or Munich, but these are longer and more expensive.

## By train

Travelling to Turkey **by train** is both slow and expensive, and only makes sense if you are a rail buff and/or want to visit several other countries en route. The most direct route **from the UK** begins with the Eurostar service from London Waterloo to Brussels, then an overnight sleeper to Vienna, followed by a daytime Euro-City departure to Budapest, and finally two more nights aboard a sleeper to İstanbul (including a change of engine in Bucharest), making a total journey of four days and three nights. As each leg is booked separately, you can stop off in any of the cities where you change trains, but the cost, a minimum of £248 one-way, makes the purchase of an InterRail pass (see below) mandatory.

### InterRail passes

The best train deal is provided by an **InterRail pass**, which offers unlimited travel (except for express-train supplements and reservation fees) on a zonal basis within thirty European rail networks. These passes are only available to European residents, and you must provide proof of residency to purchase one. To reach Turkey via the route described above, you need a Global Pass. For under-26s, you're looking at €399 (£339) for a pass valid for one month's second-class travel covering thirty countries, including Turkey, €599 (£508) if you're over 26. A cheaper alternative is their five-days-travel-within-ten-days option – €159 (£135) under-26s, or €249 (£212) for over-26s. It's possible to travel first class on an over-26s' pass at a considerably higher cost.

InterRail passes do not allow free travel between Britain and the Continent, although InterRail pass holders are eligible for discounts on rail travel in Britain and Northern Ireland, the cross-Channel ferries, and the London–Paris Eurostar service.

## Packages and special-interest holidays

Although it's easy enough to sort out your own flight to, and accommodation in, İstanbul, many people still prefer to book a package, partly to avoid the hassle but also because they can actually work out cheaper than a DIY visit. A three- or four-night city break to İstanbul starts at around £300 for three-star B&B accommodation (including flights and transfers), rising to around £750 for the same break in one of the city's classic luxury hotels. The determining price for city breaks is the departure airport, the cheapest taking advantage of easyJet's Luton– or Gatwick–İstanbul runs. **Specialist holidays** focusing on Byzantine art, Ottoman architecture and the like, which rely on the services

of a guest lecturer, are much more expensive, from £1100 and up for a week.

## Booking agents and travel sites

**www.cheapflights.co.uk, www.cheapflights.com, www.cheapflights.com.au** Price comparison on flights, short breaks, packages and other deals.

**www.expedia.co.uk, www.expedia.com, www.expedia.ca** Discount airfares, all-airline search engine and daily deals.

**www.lastminute.com, www.lastminute.com.au, www.lastminute.co.nz** Good flight-only and holiday package deals available at very short notice.

**www.travelocity.co.uk, www.travelocity.com, www.travelocity.ca** Destination guides, hot fares and good deals for car rental and accommodation.

## Airlines

**Air Canada** US ☎1-888/247-2262, www.aircanada.ca.

**Air France** UK ☎0845/0845 111, Republic of Ireland ☎01/605 0383, US ☎1-800/237-2747, Canada ☎1-800/667-2747; www.airfrance.com.

**Air New Zealand** Australia ☎13 24 76, New Zealand ☎0800/737 000 or 09/357 3000; www.airnz.com.

**Alitalia** US ☎1-800/223-5730, Canada ☎1-800/361-8336; www.alitalia.com.

**American Airlines** US ☎1-800/433-7300, www.aa.com.

**British Airways** UK ☎0845/773 3377, Republic of Ireland ☎0141/222 2345, US & Canada ☎1-800/AIRWAYS, Australia ☎02/8904 8800, New Zealand ☎09/356 8690; www.britishairways.com.

**easyJet** UK ☎0871/750 0100, www.easyjet.com.

**Delta Air Lines** US ☎1-800/241-4141, www.delta.com.

**Emirates** Australia ☎02/9290 9700 or 1300/303 777, New Zealand ☎09/377 6004, South Africa ☎086/136 4728; www.emirates.com.

**Germanwings** UK ☎0870/252 1250, www.germanwings.com.

**Gulf Air** Australia ☎02/9244 2199, New Zealand ☎09/308 3366; www.gulfairco.com.

**KLM** UK ☎08705/074 074, US ☎1-800/447-4747, Canada ☎514/397-0775, Australia ☎1300/303 747, New Zealand ☎09/309 1782; www.klm.com.

**Lufthansa** UK ☎0845/773 7747, Republic of Ireland ☎01/844 5544, US ☎1-800/645-3880, Canada ☎1-800/563-5954, Australia ☎1300/655 727 or 02/9367 3887, New Zealand ☎09/303 1529 or 008/945 220; www.lufthansa.com.

**Malaysia Airlines** Australia ☎13 26 27, New Zealand ☎0800/657 472, South Africa ☎011/880 9614; www.mas.com.my.

**Qantas** Australia ☎13 13 13, New Zealand ☎0800/808 767 or 09/357 8900; www.qantas.com.au.

**Ryanair** UK ☎0870/156 9569, Republic of Ireland ☎01/609 7800; www.ryanair.com.

**Singapore Airlines** Australia ☎13 10 11 or 02/9350 0262, New Zealand ☎0800/808 909 or 09/303 2129, South Africa ☎021/674 0601; www.singaporeair.com.

**South African Airways** Australia ☎1800/221 699, New Zealand ☎09/977 2238, South Africa ☎011/978 1111; www.flysaa.com.

**Sunexpress** Germany ☎0180/5959 590, www.sunexpress.com.tr.

**Swiss** UK ☎0845/601 0956, Republic of Ireland ☎01890/200515, South Africa ☎086/004 0506; www.swiss.com.

**Thai Airways** Australia ☎1300/651 960, New Zealand ☎09/377 3886; www.thaiair.com.

**Turkish Airlines** UK ☎020/7766 9300 or 0161/489 5289, US & Canada ☎1-800/874-8875, Australia ☎02/9299 8400; www.thy.com.

**United Airlines** US ☎1-800/538-2929, www.united.com.

## Discount travel agents

**New Frontiers/Nouvelles Frontières** US ☎1-800/677-0720, Canada ☎514/871-3000; www.newfrontiers.com. French discount-travel firm, with branches in New York, LA, San Francisco and Montréal.

**North South Travel** UK ☎01245/608291, www.nstravel.demon.uk. Flight agency offering discounted fares – profits are used to support projects in the developing world, especially the promotion of sustainable tourism.

**Rosetta Travel** Northern Ireland ☎028/9064 4996, www.rosettatravel.com. Reliable flight and holiday agent, offering low flight prices out of Belfast, insurance, car hire etc.

**STA Travel** UK ☎0870/160 6070, US ☎1-800/777-0112 or 1-800/781-4040, Canada ☎1-888/427-5639, Australia ☎1300/360 960, New Zealand ☎0508/782 872, South Africa ☎086/178 1781; www.statravel.com. Worldwide specialists in low-cost flights and tours for students and under-26s. Also student IDs, travel insurance, car rental, rail passes and more.

**Trailfinders** UK ⓣ020/7628 7628, Republic of Ireland ⓣ01/677 7888, Australia ⓣ1300/780 212; ⓦwww.trailfinders.com. One of the best-informed and most efficient agents for independent travellers, for scheduled flights only.
**Travel Cuts** US ⓣ416/979-2406, Canada ⓣ1-800/667-2887; ⓦwww.travelcuts.com. Canadian student-travel organization.

## Tour operators

### Activity and adventure

**Adventure World** Australia ⓣ02/8913 0755 or 08/9226 4524, ⓦwww.adventureworld.com.au; New Zealand ⓣ09/524 5118, ⓦwww.adventureworld.co.nz. Tours of western and central Turkey, which include İstanbul and also the Gallipoli landing sites.
**Adventures Abroad** US ⓣ1-800/665-3998 or 604/303-1099, ⓦwww.adventures-abroad.com. Offers moderately active seven- to ten-day jaunts in western Turkey, and thirteen- to twenty-dayers in the east of the country.
**Sun Island Tours** Australia ⓣ02/9283 3840, ⓦwww.sunislandtours.com.au. Specialize in eastern Mediterranean destinations, with several options in Turkey, the most pertinent of which combines İstanbul with Anzac (Gallipoli).
**Wilderness Travel** US ⓣ1-800/368-2794 or 510/558-2488, ⓦwww.wildernesstravel.com. Offers two eleven-day trips including İstanbul: one encompasses İstanbul, Cappadocia and the Aegean, the other a similar geography but the Aegean section is by yacht. Both allow three-day add-ons in İstanbul.

### City breaks

**Anatolian Sky** UK ⓣ0121/325 5500, ⓦwww.anatolian-sky.co.uk. Turkey specialist offering city breaks in classic hotels in İstanbul.
**Cachet Travel** UK ⓣ020/8847 3846, ⓦwww.cachet-travel.co.uk. Offers three-day breaks in a couple of decent hotels in Sultanahmet, with an additional nights' option.
**Club Travel** South Africa ⓣ0860/555 777. Eight branches throughout the country, offering city breaks to İstanbul and cheap flights.
**IAH** UK ⓣ0870/027 2921, ⓦwww.iah-holidays.co.uk. City breaks in three-, four- and five-star accommodation, Formula 1 Grand Prix packages and ANZAC tours to Gallipoli.
**Tulip Holidays** UK ⓣ020/8211 0001, ⓦwww.tulipholidays.com. Turkey and North Cyprus only specialists, offering city breaks in a range of hotels in both Sultanahmet and Taksim. A good bet for combining the metropolis with a beach holiday on the Med or Aegean.

### History, art and culture

**Andante Travels** UK ⓣ01722/715 800, ⓦwww.andantetravels.co.uk. Relaxed but fascinating one-week guided tours of İstanbul's Byzantine and Ottoman heritage, with a specialist guide-lecturer, including all the sites you'd expect and a few surprises. Guests are free to join in the evening meal or do their own thing.
**Cultural Folk Tours** US ⓣ1-800/935-TURK or 858/566-5951, ⓦwww.boraozkok.com. Up to nine annual departures by this 1978-established San Diego-based company, led (and musically accompanied) by Bora Özkök himself. Offer several bus tours that get off the beaten track, but will arrange private tours in İstanbul and environs for interested parties.
**Holt's Tours** UK ⓣ01304/612248, ⓦwww.holts.co.uk. Battlefields specialist with a one-week tour of western Turkey, focusing on Gallipoli and the Dardanelles, in autumn (thus avoiding ANZAC Day mayhem).
**Martin Randall** UK ⓣ020/8742 3355, ⓦwww.martinrandall.com. Offer an interesting week-long art history-orientated itinerary visiting İstanbul, Bursa, Edirne and İznik, and another combining İstanbul with Cappadocia.

## Rail contacts

**Euro Railways** ⓦwww.eurorailways.com. Really good all-in-one outlet for all sorts of passes and tickets (though you can't get a simple fare to İstanbul).
**InterRail** ⓦwww.interrailnet.com or www.inter-rail.co.uk. You may save some money by booking your pass via the InterRail website.
**The Man in Seat 61** ⓦwww.seat61.com. Named after British rail-buff Mark Smith's favourite seat on the Eurostar, this non-commercial site is full of practical advice and planning on any train journey from the UK to just about anywhere in Eurasia (including Turkey). You can't buy tickets here, but all the necessary contacts are provided.

# Red tape and visas

**To enter Turkey, you'll need a full passport, and many countries require visas. For some, these are available only at the point of entry, for others from the Turkish Consulate or embassy in their home country. Visas are required for citizens of the UK (£10), Ireland (€10), the US (US$20), Canada (CAN$60), Australia (AUS$20) and South Africa (ZAR$15) plus Israel, Italy, Portugal, the Netherlands and Spain. New Zealanders don't require one. Everyone, regardless of nationality, should have at least six months' validity on their passport. Note that as entry requirements change from time to time, you should check what's required well before your intended departure date with the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs at ⓦwww.mfa.gov.tr.**

Even though İstanbul's airports should be able to convert between different currencies (usually to your disadvantage) and give change for large notes, it's far better to arrive with the exact amount of money for your visa in the relevant currency. **Tourist visas** are multiple entry, and for most visitors, including citizens of the UK, Ireland, the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Spain and Italy, are valid for three months from the date of issue – if you leave on a day-trip, to Greece or Bulgaria say, you should not have to pay for a new visa on re-entry. It is forbidden to take up employment during your three months. Note that for South Africans the visa is multiple entry but valid for only one month.

Once inside the country, you can **extend your visa** once only, for a further three months, by applying to the Foreigners' Department (Yabancı Bürosu) of the Security Division (Emniyet Müdürlüğü) in any provincial capital. Do this well before your time expires, as it may take several weeks to process. If you know in advance that you want to stay longer, you should apply to the consulate in your own country for a **long-stay visa**. On arrival in Turkey, the Yabancı Bürosu will convert it to a residence permit (*ikamet tezkeresi*), valid initially for one year (two with a work permit). Further renewals will be for three or five years. In either case, you will be required to show means of support (savings, a regular income from abroad or legal work in Turkey) and relinquish your passport until the permit is issued. UK citizens pay 500TL for a one-year residence permit. Many people still nip across to a Greek island, Bulgaria or Northern Cyprus every three months and re-enter Turkey to obtain a new three-month stamp, rather than go through the trouble of applying for a residence permit. Depending on the ports of entry/exit, you may need to stay out of the country for at least 24 hours.

## Turkish embassies and consulates abroad

**Australia** 60 Mugga Way, Red Hill, Canberra ACT 2603 ☎02/6295 0227.
**Canada** 197 Wurtemburg St, Ottawa, ON K1N 8L9 ☎613/789-4044.
**Ireland** 11 Clyde Rd, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4 ☎01/668 5240.
**New Zealand** 15–17 Murphy St, Level 8, Wellington ☎04/472 1290.
**South Africa** 1067 Church St, Hatfield 0181, Pretoria ☎012/342 5063.
**UK** 43 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PA ☎020/7393 0202.
**US** 2525 Massaschusetts Ave NW, Washington, DC 20008 ☎202/612-6700.

## Consulates in İstanbul

**Australia** Asker Ocağı Cad 15, Elmadağ, Şişli ☎0212/243 1333.
**Canada** İstiklal Cad 373/5 ☎0212/251 9838.
**New Zealand** Yesilçimen Sok 75, Ihlamur ☎0212/327 2211.
**South Africa** (Honorary Consul) Alarko Centre, Musallim Naci Cad 113–115, Ortaköy, İstanbul ☎0212/260 378.
**UK** Meşrutiyet Cad 34, Tepebaşı, Beyoğlu ☎0212/293 7540.
**US** Kaplıcalar Mevkii Sok 2, İstinye ☎0212/335 9000.

## Customs and border inspections

Since Turkey's customs union with the EU in the year 2000, most European travellers are free to bring in valuable electronic gadgets without having them written into their passport. But since Turkey is not yet actually an EU member, **duty-free limits** – and sales – for alcohol and tobacco are still prevalent. Limits are posted clearly at İstanbul's airports, and apply for all frontiers. If you haven't exploited your allowance at your departure airport, you can usually buy duty-free goods at your Turkish port of arrival, at prices considerably cheaper than northern European airports.

Few people get stopped departing Turkey, but the guards may be on the lookout for **antiquities** and **fossils**. Penalties for trying to smuggle these out include long jail sentences, plus a large fine. What actually constitutes an antiquity is rather vague (see p.227), but it's best not to take any chances.

# Information and maps

**It's only worth a visit to a Turkish tourist office if you happen to live near one, as the glossy brochures and basic maps are not terribly informative and can easily be picked up from a tourist office on your arrival in İstanbul.**

İstanbul has five tourist offices. Most convenient for the majority of visitors is the one in Sultanahmet, near the Hippodrome at Divan Yolu 3 (daily 9am–5pm; ☎0212/518 8754), which has English-speaking staff and is moderately helpful. Other possibly useful offices are located in the *Hilton* on Cumhüriyet Caddesi near Taksim (daily 9am–5pm; ☎0212/233 0592) and on Beyazit Meydanİ, just west of the Grand Bazaar (daily 9am–6pm; ☎0212/522 4902). If you can resist the temptation to get into the city centre as soon as possible, there's another in the Arrivals terminal at Atatürk International airport (24hr; ☎0212/465 3151). The tourist office in Karaköy Kemankeş Caddesi (daily 9am–5pm; ☎0212/249 5776) is really aimed at cruise-ship passengers disgorging from the nearby dock, whilst the one in the entrance of Sirkeci station in Eminönü (daily 9am–5pm; ☎0212/511 5888) is shabby and the staff disinterested.

### Turkish information offices abroad

**www.tourismturkey.org**

**Australia** Room 17, Level 3, 428 George St, Sydney, NSW 2000 ☎02/9223 3055, ✉turkish@ozemail.co.au.

**Canada** Constitution Square, 360 Albert St, Suite 801, Ottawa, ON K1R 7X7 ☎613/230-8654.

**Ireland** Refer to the embassy at 11 Clyde Rd, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4 ☎01/668 5240.

**New Zealand** Refer to the embassy at 15–17 Murphy St, Level 8, Wellington ☎04/472 1290.

**UK** First Floor, 170–173 Piccadilly, London W1V 9DD ☎020/7766 9300.

**US** 821 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017 ☎212/687-2194; 2525 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington, DC 20008 ☎202/612-6800.

## Turkey on the internet

There are many Turkey-related sites on the internet. A good general introduction to the country and İstanbul can be gained from the official **Ministry of Culture and Tourism** site (www.goturkey.com). To find out what's going on in the city, www.timeoutistanbul.com/english is the most informative **listings** site, though it's also worth looking at the other listings/ticketing sites below.

### Useful websites

#### General

**www.mymerhaba.com** Intended for expats/long-term residents, and strongest on İstanbul, but

nonetheless an authoritative and wide-ranging site with lots of goodies (including arcana about the likes of *sahlep*, *boza* and *nargiles*, plus news of upcoming events, and ticket-booking functions).
**www.turkeycentral.com** Essentially a portal to a claimed figure of nearly 5000 other sites; including a booking service for İstanbul hotels.
**www.turkishculture.org** Not terribly innovative – but it does give a useful rundown on everything from architecture to ceramics, literature to music and lifestyles to cuisine – with plenty of photographs and illustrations.
**www.turkeygaytravel.com** Fill in the online form with your criteria and this site will help you find gay-friendly accommodation, particularly in İstanbul. Also a few useful reviews of clubs and discos in the capital.
**www.turkeytravelplanner.com** Very informative site, regularly updated, dealing with travel in İstanbul and all over the country.

### Antiquities and architecture

**www.exploreturkey.com** Excellent background on the country's historical monuments, written by an archeologist, with much information on İstanbul, and some on İznik, Bursa, Troy and Edirne to boot, though last updated in 2004.
**www.patriarchate.org/ecumenical_patriarchate/chapter_4** Literate coverage of İstanbul's numerous Byzantine monuments, though you need broadband speeds to load the lavish illustrations quickly.

### News and views

**www.turkishembassy.org** The official party line, maintained by the Turkish Embassy in the US; also good for customs, visa rules and the like.
**www.todayszaman.com** Online version of the daily paper of the same name, it has all the latest news and sport from Turkey and abroad, as well as a wide range of features (travel, arts, etc) and an expats' page. Well funded by the wealthy but controversial Fetullah Gülen, it is widely regarded as liberal-Islamic.
**www.turkishdailynews.com** Updated daily, this gives abridged versions of all this English-language paper's print-version stories, both current and archived. Secular-nationalist in tone.
**www.turkishnews.com** A site nominally run by Turkish alumni of American universities, but hitting the "Turkish News" links takes you to the utterances of the government's press and information office.

### Listings and tickets

**www.biletix.com, www.pozitif-ist.com** Online booking services for arts, cultural, music and sports events (mainly in İstanbul) in both English and Turkish.
**www.iksv.org** Website for the İstanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts, with information on the city's major music, arts and theatre events, and an online booking service – excellent site for arts lovers.
**www.istanbulcityguide.com** Reasonable online listings site, though gives only the bare facts, plus features.

## Maps and A–Zs

The maps included in this guide should be enough for most purposes, but if you're a map buff it might be worth picking up something extra. Keskin Colour's *İstanbul Street Plan* 1:8,500 is clear and accurate, though it covers only a small portion of the Asian side of the city. For the European side, *Sokak Sokak Avrupa* by İki Nokta is an A–Z-style atlas, but best of all, and worth considering if you want to explore the backstreets and find out-of-the-way sites and monuments, is Mepmedya's *Istanbul Avrupa Yakasİ*, at 1:7,500 the most detailed A–Z. The only drawback is its price, 50TL, and weight. All of these are available in the city and are far cheaper than buying something produced abroad. However, if you do want to come armed with a map, the *İstanbul City Map* 1:10,000 by Freytag and Berndt is a good bet, though Cartographia's *İstanbul* 1:12,000 is cheaper.

# Arrival

**İstanbul's main points of arrival are Atatürk International airport on the European side of the city (used by the majority of scheduled airlines), and the less convenient Sabiha Gökçen, across the Bosphorus in Asia (used mainly by budget European carriers). Trains terminate at centrally located Sirkeci station in Eminönü, just a short hop from the nightlife and hotels of Beyoğlu/Taksim or the heart of the Old City, Sultanahmet, with its top-notch sites and wide range of accommodation.**

## By plane

İstanbul's **Atatürk International airport** (Atatürk Hava Limanı; ⓣ0212/465 3000, ⓦwww.ataturkairport.com) is 24km west of the centre at Yeşilköy, near the Sea of Marmara. It has two adjacent terminals, 1km apart: international (*dışhatları*) and domestic (*içhatları*). The Havaş **bus service** runs from both terminals to the Turkish Airlines (THY) office on the north side of Taksim Square (5am–11pm; every 30min; 10TL); journey time into İstanbul is thirty minutes to an hour, depending on traffic. The only scheduled stop is in Aksaray, 200m from Yenikapı station, from where you can take a municipal **train** to Cankurtaran station (for Sultanahmet). Alternatively, a **taxi** from the airport costs around 30TL to Sultanahmet, 35TL to Taksim (fifty percent more between midnight and 6am); consult the sign posted outside the Arrivals hall for exact fares. Many hotels can arrange airport collections (on request) for 30TL. Returning to the airport, a **shuttle bus** will collect you from a hotel, pension or hostel in Sultanahmet (6TL).

The **light railway** (see p.31) runs from Atatürk International airport to the city centre (6am–12.40am; every 10min at peak times). To reach it, follow signs for "Hafif Metro/Rapid Transit". Buy two *jetons* (small metal tokens; 1.40TL each) from the kiosk. The light railway connects with the tramway at Zeytinburnu, so get off here and head the short distance to the Zeytinburnu tram stop (this is where you need the second *jeton*). The tram runs to Sultanahmet (30–45min total travel time) and across the Golden Horn, via the Galata Bridge. You can alight at Karaköy for Galata and Beyoğlu (using the Tünel, the antique funicular; see p.31) or continue to Kabataş, from where you can take the modern funicular up to Taksim Square. If you miss the change at Zeytinburnu, its possible to change from the light railway from its terminus in Aksaray, but this requires a tricky walk beneath an underpass and over a bridge to the tram stop at Yusufpaşa – no fun if you've got luggage.

From the city's second airport, **Sabiha Gökçen** (ⓣ0216/585 5000, ⓦwww.sgairport.com), used by easyJet and other low-cost European airlines, is out beyond the suburb of Pendik, in Asia. Shuttle buses run to Taksim Square (4am–1am; every hour; 10TL), taking at least an hour. Taxis are expensive (around 60TL to Taksim); the cheapest option is to take bus #E/3 to Levent Metro, then the metro to Taksim.

## By train

İstanbul has two main-line **train stations**, one at Sirkeci in Europe, the other at Haydarpaşa, across the Bosphorus in Asia. The two are linked by ferry.

Two daily trains from Western Europe arrive at **Sirkeci train station** (ⓣ0212/527 0051), located 250m above Eminönü ferry terminal: from Athens (23hr) via Thessaloniki (16hr) and Üzünköprü (6hr), and from Budapest (33hr) via Bucharest (20hr). The latter service connects with the rest of the European train network at Budapest. At Sirkeci, it's easy to find a taxi, or catch the tram from outside the station directly uphill to Sultanahmet or Aksaray. Alternatively, catch the tram across the Galata Bridge to Karaköy (for Galata/Beyoğlu) or Kabataş for Taksim via the funicular.

Trains from Asian Turkey arrive at **Haydarpaşa train station** (Ⓣ0216/348 8020), 1km north of Kadıköy. For more information see the national railways (TCDD) website Ⓦwww.tcdd.gov.tr. Ferries across the Bosphorus to Eminönü (for Sultanahmet) leave from in front of the station (daily 6.20am–12.10am; every 20min) and arrive directly below Sirkeci station. If you're staying on the Asian shore, buses, *dolmuşes* (both 1.40TL) and taxis (around 5TL) run from Haydarpaşa to Kadıköy and Üsküdar.

## By bus

There are two major **otogars** (bus stations) in İstanbul: Esenler is 10km northwest of the centre on the E800 (İstanbul–Edirne toll road); Harem is on the Asian side between Üsküdar and Kadıköy. All national bus services stop at both, regardless of destination, and both are open 24 hours.

Esenler bus station (Ⓣ0212/658 0505, Ⓦwww.otogaristanbul.com) is well organized, and some 150 companies have numbered ticket stands here. Most companies run free buses to and from Taksim, or can arrange for you to travel on one run by another company. To get to Sultanahmet from Esenler, take the light railway (6am–1am; every 15min) from the station in the centre of the *otogar* to Aksaray and switch to the tram to Sultanahmet. Taxis into town cost around 15TL. Travelling from the city centre to Esenler by light railway, remember to get off at Otogar, not Esenler station. There's a (free) shuttle service from Taksim or Sultanahmet to Esenler (usually 1hr before departure) for tickets booked through a travel agent or bus company's city offices.

Arriving in İstanbul by bus from Asia, it's worth disembarking at **Harem bus station** (Ⓣ0216/333 3763), saving a tedious journey to Esenler through terrible traffic snarl-ups. From Harem, regular ferries cross the Bosphorus to Eminönü (daily 7am–10pm; every hr), whilst private operators run boats to Beşiktaş and Kabataş. *Dolmuşes* depart every few minutes for Kadıköy and Üsküdar, leaving from the south side of the complex, beyond the ticket offices. From either of these suburbs, ferries cross to Eminönü, and from Üsküdar to Beşiktaş (for Taksim). Taxis are available everywhere, but you must pay the bridge toll (3TL) on top of the fare.

## By ferry

**Car ferries**, operated by IDO (İstanbul Deniz Otobüsleri; enquiries on Ⓣ0212/444 4436, Ⓦwww.ido.com.tr), cross the Bosphorus from Harem to Eminönü (daily 7am–10pm; every hr). **Sea bus**, car and passenger services from Yalova, Bandırma (on the İzmir–İstanbul route) and the islands of Avşı and Marmara arrive at the **Yenikapı ferry terminal**, off Kennedy Caddesi in Kumkapı, just south of Aksaray. From here, catch the suburban train from Yenikapı station, across the road from the ferry terminal; it's two stops to Sultanahmet (Cankurtaran station) or three to Sirkeci. Frequent buses depart Yenikapı for Taksim via Aksaray.

Cruise-ship arrivals will go through customs and immigration procedures at **Karaköy International Maritime Passenger Terminal**, across the Galata Bridge from Eminönü. From here (Karaköy-Galata) take the tram to Sultanahmet, or the Tünel up to Beyoğlu, or the tram to Kabataş then the modern funicular to Taksim; alternatively, take a taxi.

# City transport

**İstanbul has a wide choice of transport, from ferries to modern trams, an antique underground funicular to aged suburban trains. With over eleven million commuters a day, all public transport tends to be overcrowded, and pickpocketing is becoming more common, so use your common sense when travelling.**

The newly extended tramway links most parts of the city that you're likely to want to visit, and is by far the easiest way to negotiate certain sections of the city. The bus system is daunting, but manageable on certain routes; municipal trains are ramshackle but efficient; while taxis and *dolmuşes* (shared taxis) are very reasonably priced, with knowledgeable – if not necessarily good – drivers. Ferries across the Bosphorus and up the Golden Horn are also a great way of getting around – the year-round Bosphorus Tour is a favoured way of seeing the sights.

Traffic jams are unavoidable in İstanbul, though the historic Sultanahmet district is relatively traffic-free and easily explored on foot, as is most of Beyoğlu. Otherwise, expect to spend time in tailbacks as you travel to and from other areas of interest – it can take an hour by road from Sultanahmet to Ortaköy, for example. Where possible, travel by tram, light railway, suburban train or ferry, though these can all be jam-packed at peak times.

## Buses

İstanbul's **buses** (*otobus* in Turkish) come in a range of colours, with the bulk being the red-and-white or green municipality buses, which all have "IETT" (İstanbul Elektrik Tramway ve Tünel) written on them. There are also a substantial number of privately run buses, mainly light blue or green, which are usually older and shabbier looking. Main bus stops boast large route maps and lists of services. Most buses run daily from 6.30am to 11.30pm, though last buses depart from the outlying suburbs much earlier. For all municipal buses, either use an *akbil* or buy a ticket in advance from one of the white kiosks next to main bus, tram or metro stops (regular ticket 1.40TL), which you deposit in the metal box next to the driver on boarding. On privately run buses, the conductor will accept either cash or *akbils*. Touts at most main stops also sell them for a small mark-up. Buy an *akbil* if you intend using the buses often, as you can walk for miles trying to find a ticket kiosk in suburban areas.

On the European side, **main bus terminals** are at Eminönü, Taksim Square, Beşiktaş and Aksaray; and on the Asian side, at Üsküdar and Kadıköy. Few buses pass through Sultanahmet, so walk, or catch the tram three stops, down the hill to the bus station at Eminönü (in front of the ferry terminal). **From Eminönü**, there are buses to Taksim, west-bound services to Aksaray and

### Akbils

An **akbil** (automatic travel pass) is a must if you're staying for a few days or more and want to travel around the city using public transport. After paying an initial, refundable, deposit of 6TL, these can be "charged" to whatever value you require at kiosks at Eminönü, Sirkeci, Aksaray, Taksim and the Tünel, or at the automatic terminals in main *otogars*. The passes are accepted on all municipal and some private buses, sea buses, ferries, trains (for local journeys only), the metro and the tram. All either have *akbil* machines or turnstiles; press the *akbil* against the receptor and the appropriate journey cost (including a small discount of *10 kuruş*) is deducted. Weekly and monthly passes are also available, but as you need a photo ID card these are probably only of interest to long-stayers.

## Useful bus routes

If you can get the hang of it, buses are an OK way to travel around the city, and for some locations are the only feasible option short of an expensive taxi ride. For information in English on all routes, check Ⓦ www.iett.gov.tr/en.

### Asian side

**#12 and #14** Kadıköy to Üsküdar.

**#15/A** Üsküdar up the Bosphorus to Beylerbeyi, Kanlıca and Anadolu Kavağı.

### European side

**#22** Kabataş up the Bosphorus including Beşiktaş, Ortaköy, Kuruçeşme, Arnavutköy, Bebek, Emirgan and İstinye.

**#25/A** Levent Metro to Maslak, Tarabya, Sariyer and Rumeli Kavağı.

**#28** Edirnekapİ to Beşiktaş via Fatih, Eminönü, Karaköy, Tophane and Kabataş.

**#28/T** Topkapı to Beşiktaş via Fatih, Eminönü, Karaköy, Tophane and Kabataş.

**#30/D** Yenikapİ to Ortaköy via Unkapanı Atatürk Bridge, Karaköy and Beşiktaş.

**#36/V** Vezneciler (Beyazit) to Edirne kapı via Fatih/Yavuz Selim Camii.

**#38/E** Eminönü to Edirne Kapı (city land walls) via Unkapanı/Atatürk Bridge and Fatih.

**#40** Taksim up the Bosphorus including Beşiktaş, Kuruçeşme, Arnavutköy, Bebek, Emirgan, İstinye, Tarabya and Sariyer.

**#43** Taksim to Beşiktaş via Nişantaşı and Maçka.

**#54/HT** Taksim to upper Golden Horn (for Miniaturk, Rami Koç Museum and Santralistanbul).

**#151** Sariyer to Kiliyos (Black Sea) via Rumeli Fener.

**#830** Otogar to Taksim via Fatih, Unkapanİ and Tepebaşı.

Topkapı, and services to the Bosphorus shore, through Beşiktaş, Ortaköy and Arnavutköy to Bebek, where you'll have to change to continue on through the suburbs as far as the village of Rumeli Kavağı. Buses **from Taksim Square** head through Mecidiyeköy to the northern suburbs, down along the Bosphorus through Beşiktaş, Ortaköy and Aranvutköy, and across the Horn to Topkapı and Aksaray. The **Metrobus** system, where buses use dedicated lanes, have speeded things up for commuters; the current routes are of little interest to visitors, though there are plans to extend the route across to the Asian side. Buses run every half hour from 5.30am to 1.30am.

## Trains

The **municipal or suburban train network** (*banliyö treni*), operated by Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devlet Demiryolları (TCDD), consists of one line on either side of the Bosphorus. It's hardly comprehensive, but elaborate plans exist to link the two via a tunnel under the Sea of Marmara (see p.31).

Trains are frequent (daily 7am–9.30pm) and cheap, though crowded at morning and evening rush hours. One line runs **from Haydarpaşa** (enquiries on Ⓣ0212/336 0475) out to Göztepe and Bostancı, and along the Gulf of İzmit to Gebze; the other, **from Sirkeci** (Ⓣ0212/527 0051), runs to Halkalı, along the shores of the Sea of Marmara, stopping at Kumkapı (known for its fish restaurants), Yenkapı (for the sea-bus ferry terminal), Yedikule (for the city walls and fortress) and Yeşilköy, not far from Atatürk International airport. Journeys cost the same flat **fare** (1.10TL) and *akbils* are accepted on local lines. At Sirkeci, you buy a *jeton* (metal token) from the kiosk (insert it at the turnstile), but Haydarpaşa still uses tickets, again available from kiosks.

## Trams

The **main tram** service, or *tramvay* – see box on p.32 for the **antique tram** – runs from Zeytinburnu via Topkapı to Aksaray (where it connects with the light railway or *hafif* metro), Laleli, Universite, Beyazit,

## The Marmaray Project

In the autumn of 2008, the laying of sections of tubing forming a **tunnel under the Bosphorus** was completed and an underwater link between European and Asian İstanbul, an idea that first hit the drawing board back in the Ottoman period, finally became a reality. Test runs through the rail tunnel are set to begin in 2010, with the public opening scheduled for 2011. The tunnel will form part of a line stretching some 76km, from Halkalİ on the European side to Gebze in Asia, and will link the city's two international airports, Atatürk and Sabiha Gökçen. The section from Yenikapİ to Sirkeci will be underground, as will the new Sirkeci station and its counterpart across the Bosphorus in Üsküdar. Work has been delayed by the unearthing of many important archeological finds during construction, notably a massive Byzantine harbour, complete with ships, at Yenikapı. The new rail link will inegrate with the rest of the city's transport system, and should see some 70,000 passengers per hour whizzing under the waters of the Bosphorus.

Cemberlitaş, Sultanahmet, downhill to Eminönü, and across the Galata Bridge to Karaköy (Galata), Tophane, Fındıklı and Kabataş. It is the most useful mode of transport in the city for the majority of visitors, linking the Old City (Sultanahmet and the Grand Bazaar) with the cultural and nightlife hub of Beyoğlu across the Golden Horn. Trams are frequent and operate from 6am to midnight. Approaching trams signal their arrival with a bell, and passengers must wait on the concrete platforms, placed at regular intervals along the tracks. Note that the tram stops are marked, confusingly, by the same "M" sign as the light railway. *Jetons* (1.40TL) can be bought at booths next to the platforms and are deposited in turnstiles on entry, or you can use an *akbil*.

## The light railway and metro

The **light railway**, or *hafif* metro, runs west from Aksaray via the inter-city *otogar* near Esenler, to Atatürk International airport. Only small sections of this line run underground, whereas on the northern side of the Golden Horn, the Taksim to Levent section is a true **metro**, and runs from Taksim Square via Omsmanbey, Şişli and Gayrettepe to Levent. Trains leave every fifteen minutes (Mon–Thurs 6am–12.30am, Fri & Sat 6.30am–1am, Sun 6.30am–12.30am); tickets (1.40TL) are inserted in turnstiles on entry, or use an *akbil*. As well as being useful for getting to and from the airport, it can also be used to reach the city walls, not far from the Kariye Camii.

## Funiculars and the cable car

The **antique funicular**, between Karaköy and İstiklal Caddesi in Beyoğlu, known as the **Tünel**, connects with the antique tram (see p.32 for info on both) on İstiklal Caddesi. A **modern funicular**, completed in 2006, links Kabataş, at the northern end of the tramline, with Taksim Square (and the metro). The **cable car** linking the southern shore of the Golden Horn in Eyüp with the *Pierre Loti* café and Eyüp cemetery does not link with the rail or tram systems, but does save your legs. Use you *akbil* or buy a ticket (1.40TL).

## Dolmuşes and minibuses

**Dolmuşes** are shared taxis running on fixed routes, departing only when full ("dolmuş" means "full"). **Minibus** services on longer routes tend to run along main arteries and depart according to a schedule known only to their drivers. Both *dolmuşes* and minibuses display their destination in the window. A flat **fare** (fixed by the municipality) is levied: watch what Turkish passengers are paying – usually a little more than a municipality bus – shout your destination to the driver and pay accordingly, passing the money via other passengers. *Dolmuş* and minibus stands at points of origin are denoted with a signposted "D". Services can be hailed at any point along the route; they're most frequent during rush hour and operate later than the regular buses, sometimes until 2am. To get off, call *müsait bir yerde* or *inecek* (pronounced "inejek") *var*.

## Travel nostalgia: the Tünel and the antique tram

The easy way to make the long haul up the hill from the Golden Horn onto İstiklal Caddesi, İstanbul's premier shopping street, is via the **Tünel** (Mon–Sat 7am–10pm, Sun 7.30am–10pm; every 15min; 1.30TL). This one-stop funicular railway opened in 1875 and is the world's third-oldest passenger underground. The lower Tünel station is in Karaköy, just across the Galata Bridge, from where it takes a matter of minutes to whisk you to the upper station, at the bottom (southern) end of İstiklal Caddesi; use an *akbil* (see p.29) or purchase a *jeton* before boarding. The Rahmi Koç Industrial Museum in Hasköy (see p.142) has a restored nineteenth-century Tünel car on display, worth seeking out if you're a period-transport or nostalgia buff.

The **antique tram** rattles is way along the 1.5-kilometre length of İstiklal Caddesi from the upper Tünel station in Karaköy to Taksim Square (daily 9am–9pm; every 15min; 1.30TL). Tickets can be purchased from kiosks at either end of the route or at the one fixed-stop halfway, at Galatasaray School; *akbils* are also accepted. With its turn-of-the-century look (drivers are adorned in vintage costumes) and smart red-and-cream livery, it lends pedestrianized İstiklal Caddesi a certain period charm – as well as saving your legs.

## Taxis

**Taxis** are ubiquitous, with over 19,000 legal *taksici* (taxi drivers) in the city. They are invariably painted yellow. **Fares** are reasonable: a theoretical rate of just under 10TL per 5km, with an extra toll when crossing either of the Bosphorus bridges. All taxis are equipped with **meters**, but check that the driver switches it on to avoid arguments later. Be careful that you're not charged either ten times what's shown on it, or the night rate (an extra fifty percent that should only be levied between midnight and 6am). Older meters have two small lights marked *gündüz* (day) and *gece* (night); on newer meters, the rate flashes up alternately with the running cost. If there's any trouble, start discussing the *polis*, especially at any suggestion of a flat fare, and if necessary note the registration number and call the Tourist Police (see p.46). Unregistered cabs are a major headache, with some 10,000 working the streets, and there is talk of scrapping the night rate to stop these rogue operators undercutting registered taxis.

## Ferries, sea buses and water taxis

The main **ferry** company is the efficient İDO (İstanbul Deniz Otobüsleri; enquiries on ⓣ0212/444 4436, ⓦwww.ido.com.tr), with seasonal (mid-June to mid-Sept) timetables available from the ferry terminals and from tourist offices and their website. On the busiest routes – such as Eminönü to Kadıköy or Üsküdar – there are generally three to five ferries an hour between 6am and midnight; all have a flat fare of 1.40TL each way. For both ferries and the faster sea buses (see below), buy a *jeton* and deposit it at the turnstile on entry, or use your *akbil* (and save over 2TL per return trip). The busiest routes are also served by several other small, privately run ferries, many under the umbrella of the co-operative **Turyol**. Most Turyol boats leave from a terminal just west of the Galata Bridge in Eminönü, or over the water in Karaköy, again just west of the Galata Bridge, the destinations being Haydarpaşa and Kadİköy, respectively; tickets are sold at kiosks on the quayside.

At the main **City Ferry Terminal** at Eminönü – between Sirkeci station and the Galata Bridge – there's a line of ferry quays or terminals (*iskelesi* in Turkish). These were being reorganized and updated at the time of writing, so the way these are numbered on tourist-office and other city maps may bear little relationship to the reality on the ground. On the west side of the Galata Bridge is Yemiş İskelesi, for ferries up the Golden Horn to Eyüp via Kasimpaşa, Fener and Balat (roughly hourly 7am–8pm). The terminal nearest to (the east side of) the Galata Bridge is Boğaz İskelesi, from where ferries run up the Bosphorus to Rumeli

Kavağı (see Bosphorus Cruise, p.160). Ferries from terminals just east of this cross to Üsküdar (daily 6.30am–11pm), Kadiköy (daily 7am–8.40pm) and Harem.

Regular İDO ferries link Karaköy (on the other side of the Galata Bridge) to Haydarpaşa and Kadiköy (daily 6.30am–9.45pm), and also ply from here up the Golden Horn to Fener, Balat, Hasköy, Sütlüce and Eyüp (daily 7.45am–9.15pm). From Kabataş, ferries cross the Bosphorus to Kadİköy (Mon–Fri 7am–8pm), with a daily service (6.45am–9pm) from Beşiktaş to Kadİköy and Üsküdar. There are also regular ferries to the Prince's Islands from Kabataş (daily 6.50am–midnight, less frequent in winter).

From Boğaz İskelesi, İDO operates the popular daily **Bosphorus Cruise** (Boğaz Hatti), a cruise to Rumeli Kavağı and Anadolu Kavağı, the most distant villages up the Bosphorus on the European and Asian sides respectively (June–Oct daily 10.35am, noon, 1.35pm & 7pm). For more information, see p.160.

Much quicker than the ferries are the **sea buses** (*deniz otobüsleri*), which run from Kabataş, at the eastern end of the tramway, across the Bosphorus and into the Sea of Marmara, though these run less frequently except at peak commuter times. Sea-bus fares are a flat 7TL for the Princes' Islands and 15TL to Yalova on the south shore of the Sea of Marmara. There are numerous other sea-bus routes, including Bakırköy to Bostancı via Kadıköy and Yenikapı (hourly 7.30am–10pm), and from Kabataş to the Princes' Islands (6–12 daily). **Timetables** are available from all sea-bus terminals and at Ⓦwww.ido.com.tr (under "tarife bilgileri"). If you're heading for İznik, Bursa or one of the Marmara İslands, sea buses and the slightly quicker *hızlı feribot* (fast ferries) depart from the terminal in Yenikapı, also a stop on the suburban train line from Sirkeci.

**Water taxis** (*deniz taksi*), introduced in July 2008, are massively oversubscribed, so unless the fleet is considerably increased don't bank on whizzing up and down the Bosphorus in one. Theoretically, you call Ⓣ444 4436, give your name and your pick-up, drop-off points and a water taxi will collect you from one of the 27 designated docks, which include the Prince's Islands as well as numerous stops on both sides of the Bosphorus as far up as Rumeli Kavağı. It's a shared **fare** system, and the initial 15TL fare, plus 10TL per nautical mile travelled, is not too exorbitant if there are several passengers. Night fares are double. For more information, see Ⓦwww.deniztaksi.com.

## Cars

Driving in İstanbul is extremely hazardous – after South Korea, Turkey has the second highest fatality rate in the world (with 77 deaths per 100,000 vehicles on the road; by comparison, the UK has 13 deaths for the same number of vehicles) – and should be avoided unless you're a very experienced driver, and have the wherewithal to negotiate a strange, traffic-choked metropolis with poor signposting and few parking spaces. The only time it would make any sense is if you're circling the Sea of Marmara to take in Edirne, Gallipoli, Troy, Bursa and İznik. If you're still determined to drive in the city, to rent a car you need to be at least 21 years old (27 for Groups E and above), with a **driving licence** held for at least one year. An **International Driving Permit**, from the RAC or AA in Britain/Australasia or the AAA/CAA in North America, is not essential – your own home licence will do at a pinch – but is very helpful, especially at traffic-control points (show the police your IDP, not your main home licence, in case they decide to keep it for any reason). **Rental rates** can be exorbitant, usually at least as much as in the UK. The agencies below have pick-up points at Atatürk International airport and (bar Europcar) Sabiha Gökçen, and offices elsewhere in İstanbul – check their websites for working hours. Expect to pay 60–165TL a day for a week's hire (thirty percent more for daily hire) depending on the car.

When checking a car out, agency staff should make a thorough diagrammatic notation of any **blemishes** on the vehicle – it's in your interest to make sure they do this, otherwise you might be blamed for something you didn't do. If you have an accident serious enough to immobilize you and/or cause major damage to other people's property, the traffic police will appear and administer alcohol tests to all

drivers, results of which must also be submitted along with an official **accident report** (*kaza raporu*) in order to claim insurance cover. It's an offence to move a vehicle involved in a crash before the police give the all-clear – leave it where it is, even if you're blocking traffic, otherwise all drivers involved risk a 50TL on-the-spot fine.

Fuel costs are very high (the second most expensive in the world after Japan) because of government taxes; diesel (*mazot* or *dizel*) is 2.4TL per litre, lead-free (*kurşunsuz*) around 2.9TL per litre. There are plenty of filling stations on all major – and many minor – highways and at numerous points across İstanbul, the biggest have restaurants and mini-supermarkets, even the smallest a shop and toilets. **Credit and debit cards** (Visa Electron, Visa, MasterCard, American Express) are widely honoured for fuel purchases. As with most card transactions in Turkey, chip-and-PIN protocol is the norm. Car **repair workshops** and spare-part dealers are located in industrial zones called *sanayis* on the city's – and other town – outskirts.

### Car-rental agencies

**Avis** UK ⓣ0870/606 0100, Republic of Ireland ⓣ01/605 7500, US ⓣ1-800/331-1084, Canada ⓣ1-800/272-5871, Australia ⓣ13 63 33, New Zealand ⓣ09/526 2847 or 0800 655 111, South Africa ⓣ0861/113 748; ⓦwww.avis.com.
**Budget** UK ⓣ0800/181 181, Republic of Ireland ⓣ01/9032 7711, US ⓣ1-800/527-0700, Canada ⓣ800-314 3932, Australia ⓣ1300/362 848, New Zealand ⓣ0800/652 227 or 09/976 2222, South Africa ⓣ0861/016 622; ⓦwww.drivebudget.com.
**Europcar** Republic of Ireland ⓣ01/614 2800, UK ⓣ0845/722 2525; ⓦwww.europcar.com.
**Hertz** UK ⓣ08708/44 88 44, Republic of Ireland ⓣ01/813 3416, US ⓣ1-800/654-3001, Canada ⓣ1-800/263-0600, Australia ⓣ13 30 39, New Zealand ⓣ0800/654 321, South Africa ⓣ0861/600 136; ⓦwww.hertz.com.

## Tours

It's worth considering a standard **city tour** if you're pushed for time or just don't want to plan an itinerary yourself. The more specialist options offered by Fest (see below) take you to some little-known sites that you may struggle to find yourself, and provide an expert guide to interpret them for you.

### Tour agencies

**Backpackers Travel** Yeni Akbıyık Cad 22, Sultanahmet ⓣ0212/638 6343, ⓦwww.backpackerstravel.net. Conveniently located agency offering half- and one-day tours of the city.
**City Sightseeing İstanbul** Aya Sofya Karşisı 1, Sultanahmet ⓣ0212/234 7777, ⓦwww.plantours.com. Hop-on, hop-off open-top bus tours departing opposite the Aya Sofya and allowing stops at the Dolmabahçe Palace, Taksim Square, Old Pera, Edirnekapı (city walls) and Kumkapı.
**Fest Travel** Barbaros Bulvaı 74, Balmucu ⓣ0212/216 1036, ⓦwww.festtravel.com.tr. Fest has been running a variety of cultural tours around the city for 22 years, and is the official operator for the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (IKSV). Their regular programme includes a half-day on the Bosphorus, an Islamic cultural tour, a Jewish heritage day and a hop-on, hop-off bus tour of the main sites. More interesting are the walking tours where the guide, usually specialist lecturers in their field, take you to out of the way, little-known sites in various quarters of the city.
**İstanbul Walks** Eski Bağdat Cad 50/14, Küçukyalı ⓣ0216/489 6032. A limited programme of half-day walks from £20 per head, running most days of the year, with licensed guides. Separate walks include the classic sites on both sides of the Golden Horn.
**Kirkit Voyage** Amiral Tafdil Sok 12, Sultanahmet ⓣ0212/518 2282, ⓦwww.kirkit.com. Very reliable company offering a variety of walking tours of the city – one concentrates on Byzantine İstanbul, another the palaces of the Bosphorus – using knowledgeable, professional guides. Also does tailor-made tours. The office is handily located if you're staying in Sultanahmet.

# Costs, money and banks

**The good news for visitors to İstanbul and its environs is that the once rampant inflation in Turkey has been brought under control and the Turkish lira is relatively stable, with inflation now in single figures. At the time of going to press there were 2.5TL to the pound, 2TL to the euros and the dollar was 1.6TL. The bad news is that the currency is a little over-valued, which, along with a fast-developing economy, means that it's no longer the cheap destination it was, with prices comparable to many places in Europe. Many İstanbullu have cash to burn, others live on a meagre 600TL a month or even less – according to some reports, Turkey has the world's second highest income disparity after Mexico.**

## Average costs

Stay in a hostel dormitory, eat in local workers' cafés or restaurants, avoid alcohol and the most expensive sites such as the Topkapı Palace and Aya Sofya and you could get by on 40–50TL a day. If that doesn't sound like much fun, double that and you could stay in a modest hotel, see the sites and have a beer or two with your evening meal. Equally, a night out on the town in the entertainment hub of Beyoğlu could easily set you back over a 100TL, more if you head up to the chic rooftop bars or venture down to the swanky places on the Bosphorus. For more information on the cost of accommodation, food and drink, see p.175, p.186 and p.204.

## Currency, cash and traveller's cheques

In January 2005, in a bid to draw a line under the bad old days of hyperinflation, when millions of lira were needed to purchase the smallest everyday item, the government introduced the Yeni Türk Lirasİ (New Turkish Lira), abbreviated as YTL, and knocked all the zeros off. In January 2009, it was the turn of the "Y" to go, and the currency reverted to its old nomenclature, the **Türk Lirası** or **TL** for short. Despite the changes, many Turks still talk in millions, which can be confusing when you are asked "bir milyon" or one million lira for a glass of tea. **Coins** are in denominations of 5, 10, 25 and 50 kuruş, as well as 1 lira, whilst **notes** come in denominations of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100 and 200 lira.

Rates for foreign currency are always better inside Turkey, so try not to buy much TL at home. Conversely, don't leave Turkey with unspent TL, as you won't get a decent exchange rate for them outside the country. It's wise to bring a fair wad of **hard currency** with you (euros are best, though dollars and sterling are often accepted), as you can often use it to pay directly for souvenirs or accommodation (prices for both are frequently quoted in euros). Although theft and pickpocketing are on the increase in tourist areas, leaving a money belt in hotel lockers is normally safe enough. **Traveller's cheques** are, frankly, not worth the bother as exchange offices (see below) and some banks refuse them, whilst those that do

### Tipping

A service charge of ten to fifteen percent is levied at the fancier restaurants, but as this goes directly to the management, the waiters and busboys should be left five percent again if they deserve it. In some places, a mandatory tip (*garsoniye*) accompanies the service charge. Round odd taxi fares upwards (you may not have a choice, as the driver may genuinely not have small change); hotel porters should be tipped appropriately.

### KDV: Turkish VAT

The Turkish variety of VAT (*Katma Değer Vergisi* or **KDV**), ranging from 8 to 23 percent depending on the commodity, is included in the price of virtually all goods and services (except car rental, where the fifteen percent figure is usually quoted separately). Look for the notice *Fiyatlarımız KDV Dahildir* (VAT included in our prices) if you think someone's trying to do you for it twice. There's a VAT refund scheme for large souvenir purchases made by those living outside Turkey, but it's such a rigmarole to get that it's probably not worth pursuing; if you insist, ask the shop to provide a *KDV İade Özel Fatura* (Special VAT Refund Invoice), assuming that it participates – very few do, and they tend to be the most expensive shops.

accept them charge a hefty commission on transactions.

## Banks and other exchange services

Unless things change dramatically, the lira's new-found stability means that you can change large amounts of cash in one go without worrying that inflation will erode its value. You should, though, try to keep all foreign-exchange slips with you until departure, if only to prove the value of purchases made in case of queries by customs.

Most state **banks** (the best of these are the Ziraat Bankası and Halk Bankası) are open Monday–Friday, 8.30am–noon and 1.30–5pm. Private banks such as Garanti Bankası and Köç operate throughout the day; larger branches of Garanti also open on Saturdays (11am–3pm). Foreign-exchange transactions won't, however, be undertaken after 4.45pm. State banks give a better exchange rate than private banks, though neither charge commission for cash. Queues, especially in state banks, can be long. Most now have an automated queuing system; take a ticket from the machine and wait for your number to appear on the digital display. **Döviz**, or exchange houses, are common in the city, with several on İstiklal Caddesi. They buy and sell foreign currency of most sorts instantly, and have the convenience of long opening hours (usually 9/10am–8/10pm) and short or nonexistent queues. Some, however, charge commission (though they usually waive it if you make a fuss, as locals never pay it), and the rate given is not as high as in the banks.

## Credit/debit cards and ATMs

**Credit cards** are now widely used in hotels, shops, restaurants and entertainment venues and with no commission (though many hotels offer discounts for cash rather than credit-card payments). Don't expect, however, to use you card in basic eating-places or small corner shops. Swipe readers plus **chip-and-PIN** protocol are now the norm in most of Turkey – if you don't know your PIN, you probably won't be able to use it.

The simplest way to get hold of money in Turkey is to use the widespread **ATM** network. Most bank ATMs will accept any debit cards that are part of the Cirrus, Maestro or Plus systems. Screen prompts are given in English on request. The daily ATM withdrawal limit for most cards is about £250/€375 equivalent (or £80–200/€120–300 per transaction), depending on the bank or even individual ATM. You can also normally get cash advances (in TL only) at any bank displaying the appropriate sign. You can also use Visa or MasterCard to get cash from ATMs, though American Express holders are currently restricted to those of Akbank. All use of a credit card to obtain cash results in a 2.75 percent commission, plus "transaction fee", being levied by your home bank.

# Mail, phones and the internet

**Most fixed-line telecommunication services are provided by TT (Türk Telecom), distinguished by its blue-on-turquoise call boxes, while post offices are easily spotted by their bold black-on-yellow PTT (Posta, Telegraf, Telefon) signs.**

## Mail

The central post office on Büyük Postane Caddesi (Ⓣ0212/5261200) in Eminönü, an imposing early twentieth-century building not far from Sirkeci station (daily 8.30am–5.30pm, 24hr section for phone calls and buying stamps) is of most use to visitors staying in the Old City. There's also a major post office at Yeniçarşİ Caddesi, off İstiklal Caddesi and opposite Galatasaray Lycee (Mon–Fri & Sun 8.30am–5.30pm; Ⓣ0212/251 5150). If you're staying in Taksim, the post office on Cumhüriyet Cad 2 (Mon–Sat 8.30am–5.30pm; Ⓣ0212/243 0284) is the most convenient. Stamps are only available from the PTT, whose website (Ⓦwww.ptt.gov.tr) has a (not necessarily up-to-date) English-language listing of services and prices.

Airmail (*uçakla*) rates to Europe are 0.80TL for postcards, 0.85TL for letters up to 20g, 19TL for 2kg, the maximum weight for letters; delivery to Europe or North America can take seven to ten days. A pricier express (*acele*) service is also available, which cuts delivery times for the EU to about three days.

**Posting slots** are clearly labelled – *yurtdışı* for overseas, *yurtiçi* for inland, *şehiriçi* for local. To receive mail **poste restante** (general delivery), articles should be addressed to you, c/o "Postrestant, Merkez Postanesi, [city name], Turkey".

## Phones

The best place to make phone calls is from either a PTT (Post Office) or a TT (Türk Telekom) centre. The **Türk Telekom** website (Ⓦwww.turktelekom.com.tr) has an English-language page listing all services and tariffs. Inside the PTT or TT, or just adjacent, there is usually a row of card (*telekart*) phones and/or a *kontürlü* (metered, clerk-attended) phone, the latter sometimes in a closed booth. **Public phones** are to be found in squares and parks, outside many public buildings and at train stations and ferry terminals. The standard Turkish phone replies are the Frenchified *Allo* or the more

### Addresses

In Turkish addresses, **street names** precede the number; if the address is on a minor alley, this will usually be included after the main thoroughfare it leads off. If you see a forward slash between two numbers, the first is the building number, the second the flat or office number. A letter following a forward slash is more ambiguous: it can mean either the shop or unit number, or be part of the general building number. Standard **abbreviations**, also used in this book, include "Cad" for *Cadde*(*si*) (avenue or main street), "Bul" for *Bulvarı* (boulevard), "Meyd" for *Meydan*(*ı*) (square), "Sok" for *Sokak*/*Sokağı* (alley) and "PK" for *Posta Kutu* (Post Box). Other useful terms are *kat* (floor), *zemin kat* (ground floor), *asma* (mezzanine), *han*(*ı*) (office block), *mahalle* (district or neighbourhood) and *çıkmaz*(*ı*) (blind alley). *Karşısı* means "opposite to", as in PTT *karşısı*. A five-digit postcode system exists, but is sporadically used; it's much more important to include the district when addressing mail. For example: Halil Güner, Kıbrıs Şehitler Cad, Poyraz Sok, Ulus Apartmanı 36/2, Kat 1, Delikliçınar, 34800 Direkköy, means that Halil Güner lives at no. 36 on Poyraz Sokak, just off Kıbrıs Şehitler Caddesi, on the first floor, Flat 2, of the Ulus apartments, in the Delikliçınar area of a larger postal district known as Direkköy.

local *Buyurun* (literally, "Avail yourself/at your service"). When using a landline remember that numbers on the European side of İstanbul all begin with ⓣ0212, on the Asian side with ⓣ0216.

"Smart" **phonecards** are used in exactly the same manner as British or North American ones, though you have little warning before being cut off; wait for the number of units remaining to appear on the screen before dialling. They are bought in units of 50 (3.75TL), 100 (7.5TL), 200 (17.5TL) and 350 (19TL). A steadily increasing number of phones have also been adapted to accept foreign **credit cards**. **Metered booths** inside PTTs or TTs, or at street kiosks or shops (look for signs reading *kontürlü telefon bulunur*) work out more expensive than cards, but are certainly far cheaper than hotels, and also tend to be quieter (plus you won't be cut off). Their disadvantage is that you can't see the meter ticking over, and instances of overcharging are not unknown.

Turkey uses a system of eleven-digit **phone numbers** nationwide, consisting of four-digit area or mobile-provider codes (all starting with "0") plus a seven-digit subscriber number. To call a number in Turkey **from overseas**, dial your country's international access code, then 90 for Turkey, then the area or mobile code minus the initial zero, and finally the subscriber number. To call home **from Turkey**, dial ⓣ00 followed by the relevant international dialling code (see list below), then the area code (without the initial zero if there is one), then the number.

**Overseas call** rates are 0.25TL per min to Europe or North America, but almost half this between 10pm and 9am and on Sundays. Try not to make anything other than local calls from a hotel room – there's usually a minimum one-hundred percent surcharge on phonecard rates.

Given the Turkish penchant for chatting, **mobile phones** have become an essential accessory in İstanbul (and beyond) – mobile numbers are prefixed ⓣ0542, ⓣ0543, ⓣ0532, ⓣ0535 and ⓣ0555. There are three networks: Turkcell, Avea and Vodafone. Assuming that you have a roaming facility, your home mobile will connect with one of the local network providers (providing it uses the standard 900 or 1800Mzh frequencies – US mobiles won't work here). Charges, though, are high (up to £1.30 per min to the UK), and you pay for incoming calls as well. If you're in the country longer than a week, and/or intend to phone home frequently (or within the city), you will save a considerable sum by purchasing a **local SIM card** and pay-as-you-go package. These are available from the (seemingly countless) mobile-phone outlets in town and city centres advertising *kontürlü* SIM cards. Vodafone SIM cards (which can take up to 24hr to activate) are 6TL and the first 100 units are 17.5TL. Typically, calls cost 0.9TL per min to Europe and North America, while an SMS message to the UK costs around 0.3TL. To purchase a SIM card, you'll need to present your passport for photocopying. Just take your phone along to one of the mobile outlets and they'll fit the new card, "unblock" your phone if necessary (this is not illegal and will not void your existing home-based contract), and even enter the scratchcard unit number and get the units credited to your phone for you.

### Emergency numbers

**Ambulance** ⓣ112
**Fire** ⓣ110
**Police** ⓣ155
**Tourist Police** ⓣ0212/527 4503

### Useful telephone numbers

**Directory assistance** ⓣ118
**International operator** (reverse charges) ⓣ115
**Postal-code assistance** ⓣ119
**Inter-city operator** ⓣ131

### International dialling codes

**Australia** ⓣ61
**Ireland** ⓣ353
**New Zealand** ⓣ64
**South Africa** ⓣ27
**UK** ⓣ44
**US & Canada** ⓣ1

## Email and the internet

The internet is part and parcel of life for millions of İstanbullu – even those that don't have their

### Web censorship

Don't bank on watching YouTube while you're here. It was first closed in 2007 for featuring a video-clip insulting to the nation's founder, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, a crime (along with the rather vague offence of "insulting Turkishness") under Turkish law. Although soon back online, it was blocked again in January 2008 and was still blocked at the time of writing. Many other sites have been banned by the courts for the same reasons. So if the website you're after comes up with the message "Bu siteye erişim engellenmiştir" ("This site has been disabled"), you'll know why.

own computers have access to myriad internet cafés, though there are frustratingly few in Sultanahmet. All the top-end hotels in the city, and many of the budget hotels and hostels around Sultanahmet, have internet access – often both terminals and wireless. Many of the trendier cafés, especially in Beyoğlu, also have wireless. Rates in internet cafés, most of which now have ADSL connections, tend to be 2TL per hour maximum. Be warned that many are excessively smoky havens for bored teenagers playing endless "shoot-em-up" computer games. More seriously, the Turkish-character keyboard you'll probably be faced with may cause some frustration. Beware in particular of the dotless "ı" (confusingly enough found right where you'll be expecting the conventional "i") which, if entered by mistake, will make an email address invalid – the Western "i" is located second key from right, middle row.

# The media

**Newspapers and magazines weren't even allowed in the country until the middle of the nineteenth century; since then, however, lost time has been made up for with a vengeance.**

Over forty mastheads, representing the full gamut of public tastes from elevated to gutter, compete for readers' attention. The airwaves were controlled exclusively by the government until the late 1980s, but with satellite dishes and overseas transmitters widely available, a vast quantity of private, cable and digital stations – mostly of poor quality – flourishes across Turkey.

## Turkish-language publications

Around seventy percent of the **newspapers** sold nationally are produced by two giant media conglomerates, the Doğan and Sabah groups. Three titles – *Sabah*, *Hürriyet* and *Milliyet* – dominate the middle market, slightly to the left of these stands *Radikal*, the best paper to pick up in the big cities for listings of cinema, exhibitions and concerts. *Taraf* is more radical than *Radical* and incurs establishment ire on virtually a daily basis. The only high-end newspaper, *Cumhuriyet*, founded as the mouthpiece of the Turkish republic in 1924, mixes conservative nationalism with old-style socialism. Turkey's Islamist papers generally give intelligent and thoughtful coverage – of the biggest sellers, *Yeni Şafak* and *Zaman*, the former is a strong supporter of the Justice and Development (AK) Party elected to power in 2002 and again in 2007, while the latter takes a more independent line.

The principal weekly **magazines** are the picture-driven *Tempo* and *Aktüel*, which

serve up a diet of showbiz gossip, news and features. A vast range of other weekly and monthly glossies includes Turkish versions of *Cosmpolitan*, football mag *Four Four Two* and the cinema monthly *Empire*.

## English-language publications

The longest-running English-language **newspaper**, widely available across central İstanbul, is the *Turkish Daily News* (TDN), now tied-in with the Doğan group's *Hüriyet*. Poor translation sometimes renders reports and opinion pieces almost meaningless, especially if you're new to Turkish politics. The weekend edition, covering both Saturday and Sunday, has more features and less up-to-date news than the daily. Every edition has a listings page devoted, in the main, to İstanbul. *Today's Zaman*, the English-language offshoot of *Zaman*, is backed by the controversial figure of Fetullah Gülen, an Islamic scholar/businessmen currently in exile in the US. It's both more professional and glossier than the *TDN*, and reads much better thanks to a higher standard of translation work. Broadly speaking, the *TDN* follows the secular/nationalist line and *Today's Zaman* is liberal/Islamic. Both cost 1.5TL and have online versions (see p.26).

Glossy **magazines** include the bimonthly *Istanbul: The Guide*, sold at newsstands (5.5TL) or available free in many of the city's larger hotels. It's fine for listings of shops, restaurants, cafés and the like but poor on up-and-coming events and features. *Time Out* Istanbul, the local imprint of the London listings magazine, is far superior and has an eighty-page English edition (8.5TL) of what's-on listings and useful coverage of new bars, clubs and restaurants. The bimonthly *Cornucopia*, an expensive (20TL) glossy upmarket magazine, sometimes has interesting features on İstanbul, as well as general pieces on everything from carpets to property renovation. The photographs are top-notch and the reviews of Turkey-related books excellent.

Easiest to find of the **international papers** are *The Guardian* (European edition), the *International Herald Tribune* and *USA Today*, though many other titles can be found in Sultanahmet and in Taksim/Beyoğlu.

## Television

Turkish TV has come a long way since the early 1980s, when it was restricted to a single, closely controlled, state-run channel. There are now a plethora of national channels and many more regional ones. Quality is often poor, though and marred by frequent and lengthy commercials.

Turkish channels include the four state-owned TRT (Turkish Radio and Television) channels where programming veers between foreign historical drama and American films (both dubbed into Turkish) and talking-heads panel discussions, punctuated by classical Turkish music interludes, variety shows and soaps. TRT-1 has a fairly balanced output not dissimilar to British channels, TRT-2 is the arts and cultural channel, TRT-3 offers live coverage of parliament, whilst TRT-4 is nominally educational. Among private channels offering light entertainment, film reruns and current affairs, Show, Star, ATV and Kanal D are the most popular. Music-orientated channels devoting their time mainly to Turkish pop videos and short "youth"-related features include Kral and Power Turk, whilst Dream has a mix of Turkish and western sounds. Best (Turkish-only) news coverage is on NTV and CNN Türk. Ideological bias is most apparent on the religious and far-right-wing channels. Most Islamic is Samanyolu ("Milky Way"), also known as STV, while Kanal Yedi and Flash also maintain a religious stance. TGRT offers a mixed diet of programmes with a right-wing slant, although its current-affairs coverage is very professionally put together.

There are several **English-language channels** shown on the nation's digital provider, Digiturk, which most mid-range-and-above İstanbul hotels offer. CNBC-e, a joint venture with America's NBC, devotes evenings and weekends to a mix of films and US TV shows such as *Prison Break*, *The Simpsons* and *My Name is Earl*. Its rival, E2, has a similar mix, and both are in English with Turkish subtitles. BBC Prime is anything but, with a tedious mix of home makeover, cooking programmes and mainstream comedies, though the post-10pm schedule is much better. Also available are CNN, BBC World and Al Jazeera, as well as Eurosport,

National Geographic and the History Channel (hit the remote's language button to get the original English language).

For football, Digiturk is the main provider and live Turkish Premier League football is exclusive to its Lig TV channel (look for the banners advertising it outside bars and cafés). English Premier League matches are shown on the pay-channel Spormax, available wherever Lig TV is showing. National team games and second division matches still appear live on TRT, while European club matches go out live on certain private channels such as Star and Show.

## Radio

Frequency-crowding means even popular channels are almost impossible to pick up without interference. Of the four **public radio stations**, Radyo Üç (The Third Programme or TRT-3), most commonly found at 88.2, 94 and 99MHz, broadcasts the highest proportion of Western music. It also airs **news bulletins in English** at 9am, noon, 2pm, 5pm, 7pm and 10pm, though its turgid stuff. NTV Radiyo (102.8) has the news in English at 6pm daily.

For Western music, Açık Radyo (FM 94.9) provides a mixed diet of rock, jazz and soul, while Radio Blue (94.5FM) specializes in Latin and jazz, and Energy (102) in jazz. Other big names offering Western music and production values include Capital FM (99.5), Kiss FM (90.3) and Metro FM (97.2). For Turkish music, the best sations are Kral (92.0) and, naturally enough, Best FM (98.4).

## Cinema

There are hundreds of cinemas across the city. **Foreign films** are shown in the original language with Turkish subtitles, apart from kid-orientated films, which are dubbed into Turkish; screenings (*a seans* in Turkish), up to five daily, generally start at 11.30am or noon, following at around 3pm, 6pm, 9pm and usually midnight. **Tickets** cost 8–15TL depending on the poshness of the cinema, with reduced general admission one night weekly (often Mon). Most films have a fifteen-minute break mid-action, to allow cigarette-smokers to satisfy their habit in the stairways and cafés. For information on Turkish cinema, see p.338.

# Opening hours and public holidays

**It's difficult to generalize about opening hours in this vast city, so it's important to check individual times for the bars, cafés, restaurants, clubs, museums and galleries detailed in the text.**

Shops are usually open daily from 9am to 6pm, though many open on a Sunday as well. Grocers open from 8am to 8pm (sometimes earlier to later) and supermarkets often stay open until 10pm. Banks and government offices open 8.30am to noon and 1.30pm to 5pm. Museum, site and gallery opening hours also vary quite markedly. Most open from 8.30 or 9am until 5 or 6pm, though some close earlier and the biggest name sites stay open until 7pm. All sites and museums are closed on the mornings of public holidays, while Istanbul's palaces are generally closed on Mondays and Thursdays. Mosques are theoretically open from dawn (first call to prayer) until nightfall (last call to prayer) but in practice many only open at prayer times, at other times you'll have to seek out the caretaker (*bekçi*). For more on visiting mosques, see box, p.42.

## Public holidays

Banks, schools and government offices all close on five of the holidays listed below:

## Mosque manners

Strolling around the tourist-thronged sites of Sultanahmet, or striding down the premier entertainment and shopping street of İstiklal Caddesi, it's sometimes hard to remember that you are in a Muslim city. İstanbul may be Turkey's most cosmopolitan, forward-looking urban centre, but a fair proportion of its inhabitants are both conservative and devout. Bear this in mind particularly when visiting a mosque. All those likely to be of interest to a foreign visitor (and many more besides) display some kind of "conduct" notice at the door outlining the **entry rules** – which are simple:

- Cover your head (women) and shoulders/upper arms (both sexes)
- No shorts or miniskirts
- Take off your shoes before entering

Many mosques now provide a plastic bag. Before entering the mosque, slip your shoes in to the bag and carry them around with you. Alternatively, place your footwear on the shelves provided.

Especially if you are in a very devout area such as Fatih, try to avoid your visit coinciding with **noon prayers** – particularly those on a Friday – the most important prayer session of the week. Once inside the mosque, you're free to wander around, take photographs and admire the interior – but keep your voice down (there are often people praying or reciting the Koran outside of the five daily prayer times) and don't take pictures of worshippers unless they give their say-so. Although the imam is a state-paid official, upkeep of the building is down to charity, so you may want to put a **donation** in the collection box.

New Year's Day, Independence/Children's Day, Youth and Sports Day, Victory Day and Republic Day.

**January 1** Yılbaşı New Year's Day.

**April 23** Ulusal Egemenlik ve Çocuk Bayramı Independence Day, celebrating the first meeting of the new Republican parliament in Ankara, and Children's Day.

**May 19** Gençlik ve Spor Günü Youth and Sports Day, also Atatürk's birthday.

**July 1** Denizcilik Günü Navy Day.

**August 26** Silahlı Kuvvetler Günü Armed Forces Day.

**August 30** Zafer Bayramı Celebration of the Turkish victory over the Greek forces at Dumlupınar in 1922.

**October 29** Cumhuriyet Bayramı Republic Day commemorates the proclamation of the Republic by Atatürk in 1923. Parades through the streets, mainly by school kids banging drums and blowing trumpets.

**November 10** The anniversary of Atatürk's death in 1938. Observed at 9.05am (the time of his death), when the whole country stops whatever it's doing and maintains a respectful silence for a minute. It's worth being on a Bosphorus ferry this morning, when all the engines are turned off, and the boats drift and blow their foghorns mournfully.

# Festivals and cultural events

**Despite the secular nature of the Turkish Republic, the nation's three major festivals are Muslim: *Ramazan* (Arabic Ramadan), *Şeker Bayramı* (Eid ul-fitr in Arabic) and *Kurban Bayramı* (Eid al-Adha), the latter two of which are major holidays as well. Otherwise, there's just a handful of festivals in and around İstanbul, notably the gypsy festival in Thrace and the oil-wrestling festival outside Edirne, though the city has an impressive cultural-events calendar.**

## Religious festivals

The religious festivals observed all over the Islamic world on dates determined by the Muslim Hijra calendar are celebrated in İstanbul, and two of the most important, the *Şeker* and *Kurban bayrams*, are public holidays. As the Islamic calendar is lunar, the dates of the four important religious festivals drift backwards eleven days each year (twelve in a leap year) relative to the Gregorian calendar. However, future dates of festivals as given on Islamic websites are provisional, owing to factors such as when the moon is sighted and the international dateline, so expect variance of a day or so in the ranges in the lists below.

**Ramazan**, although it is not a public holiday, is arguably the most important Muslim festival, if you can call a month of daylight abstention from food, water, tobacco and sex a festival. It is not a public holiday, and working life carries on as normal despite the fact that much of the population, even in İstanbul, is fasting from sunrise to sunset. Try to avoid the roads during the hour leading up to the breaking of the fast (known as *iftar*), as tired, hungry and thirsty drivers rush home for much-needed refreshment. Few restaurants in İstanbul close for *Ramazan*, but particularly if you are in more conservative areas of the city such as Fatih, be discreet about eating, drinking and smoking in public during fasting hours. On the positive side, every night of *Ramazan* has become like a mini-holiday for many İstanbullu, with free meals doled out to the less well off from soup kitchens across the city, and a (very restrained) carnival-like atmosphere in places like the Hippodrome in Sultanahmet, where hundreds of stalls are set up for the entire month, selling everything from candy-floss to *gözleme*, Turkish coffee to *köfte*. It's very much a family occasion, and a great place to visit to see how the more conservative İstanbullu enjoy themselves – and to try some good-value, Turkish speciality foods. Also note that trying to find a seat in a restaurant at *iftar* can be tricky. **Kadir Gecesi (The Eve of Power)** takes place between the 27th and 28th days of the month of *Ramazan*, the time when Mohammed is supposed to have received the Koran from Allah. The mosques – even more brilliantly illuminated than usual for the whole month – are full all night, as it's believed that prayers at this time have special efficacy; those who can't make it out tend to stay home reading the Koran and praying. On **Arife**, the last day of *Ramazan*, it is customary to visit the cemeteries and pay respects to departed ancestors; many rural restaurants are shut that evening.

The three-day **Şeker Bayramı (Sugar Holiday)** is held at the end of *Ramazan*, though it often stretches into a week-long break if the three crucial days fall in the middle of the working week. It is celebrated by family get-togethers and the giving of presents and sweets to children, and restrained general partying in the streets and restaurants; on the first night after Arife, you will have to book well in advance for tables at better restaurants.

The four-day **Kurban Bayramı (Festival of the Sacrifice)**, in which the sacrificial offering of a sheep represents Abraham's son Ishmael (a Koranic version of the Old Testament story) is marked by the slaughter of over 2.5 million sheep. It is even more important than *Şeker Bayramı*, with the head of the household

beholden to sacrifice a sheep or goat on the main day of the festival.

During both *Şeker* and *Kurban bayrams*, which are also public holidays (see below for dates), travel becomes almost impossible: from the afternoon leading up to the first evening of the holiday (a Muslim festival is reckoned from sunset) – and on the first and last days themselves – public transport is completely booked up. If you're planning to head out of İstanbul, you'll struggle to get a seat on any long-distance coach, train, plane or ferry unless you book well in advance. Note, too, that the already high accident rate on Turkey's roads soars in these national holidays (over 100 were killed and 500 injured during the 2008 *Şeker Bayramı*). Some shops and all banks, museums and government offices close during the holiday periods (although corner grocery stores stay open). The demographic balance of the city shifts, too, with millions departing the metropolis to visit relatives elsewhere in the country and visitors from all over Turkey and the Middle East heading into İstanbul.

### Provisional Şeker and Kurban bayrams dates

**2009 Şeker** Sept 20–23; **Kurban** Nov 27–Dec 1
**2010 Şeker** Sept 9–12; **Kurban** Nov 16–20
**2011 Şeker** Aug 30–Sept 2; **Kurban** Nov 6–10
**2012 Şeker** Aug 18–21; **Kurban** Oct 25–29

## Cultural festivals

The annual festival calendar is pretty full – at least between April and October, when most of the best events take place. The highlights are detailed below; for more information, consult the city tourist offices or the İstanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (Ⓦ www.iksv.org). Tickets for most events can be bought online from Ⓦ www.biletix.com or Ⓦ www.pozitif-ist.com.

### April

**International Film Festival** Turkish, European and Hollywood movies premiere at İstanbul's cinemas, mainly in Beyoğlu, plus the best of the non-English-speaking world's releases from the previous year and new prints of classic films – visiting celebrities add glitz and glamour. Midweek tickets are usually a bargain.
**Tulip Festival** Week-long festival honouring the national flower, including concerts, arts events and competitions at different locations around the city, and a final showing of the hundred best tulips. Over three million bulbs flower across the city, planted by the municipality.

### May

**Conquest Celebrations** Ⓦ www.ibb.gov.tr. Week-long celebration of the Ottoman conquest of old Constantinople (May 29, 1453) – concerts by the Ottoman Mehter military band, fancy-dress processions and fireworks.
**International Puppet Festival** Ⓣ 0212/232 0224. A celebration of Turkish Shadow Theatre, or *karagöz* – silent puppets tell their tale behind a two-dimensional screen. One venue is the Kenter Theatre.
**International Theatre Festival** Biennial event (next up in 2010), best Turkish plays (both local avant-garde and established theatre groups), and performances by leading foreign companies, which in the past have included the Royal Shakespeare Company. Some plays enacted at open-air venues such as the Rumeli Hısar, others in the Atatürk Cultural Centre and the Kenter Theatre.
**Takva Festival** Romany festival, generally lasting three days around the first weekend after May 6, held in Kırklareli, near Edirne, with bonfires, parades and music.

### June/July

**Efes Pilsen One Love** Moderately alternative city-centre weekend-long festival (2008's was held at Santralistanbul) with plenty of DJ-led dance sets and performances from international bands such as The Long Blondes and Gogo Bordello, plus home-grown acts such as Baba Zula.
**The International Music Festival** Concerts, recitals, dance and opera – this hugely successful festival was launched in 1973 to celebrate fifty years of independence and brings top-notch orchestras and soloists from all over the world to perform in such atmospheric venues as the church of Aya Irene.
**Kırkpınar Oil Westling Festival** The premier festival for this still-popular traditional sport (see p.303), attracting big crowds to the fascinating border town of Edirne.

### July/August

**International Jazz Festival** Two weeks of gigs and jamming sessions from world-class performers such as Dizzy Gillespie and Norah Jones, though the definition of jazz is stretched to include rock artists such as Lou Reed, Nick Cave and Marianne Faithfull. Outdoor venues include the Harbiye Açık Have Tiyatrosu.

**Electronica Music Festival** Ⓦ www.futuregeneration.com. Held in Parkorman in 2008, with David Guetta and Dorfmeister, this is the place for nonstop electronic dance action. Past acts have included Mylo, Sasha and Nick Warren.
**Rock N' Coke** Ⓦ www.rockncoke.com. A weekend of Western and Turkish rock held on an airfield 50km to the west of the city; service buses run from Taksim. Headliners in recent years have included Franz Ferdinand, The Cure, Korn and The Offspring. The event was cancelled in 2008, so check the web for details of future years.

### September

**İnternational İstanbul Biennial** Multimedia contemporary arts festival that usually runs mid-Sept to the first week in Nov (see box, p.219), Held odd years, next up in 2009.
**İstanbul Arts Fair** Ⓦ www.tuyap.com. A week-long fair selling the work of some fifty or so İstanbul galleries and visiting foreign artists – paintings, sculptures, pottery and fabrics. Held inconveniently at the Tüyap Centre, in the suburbs near Atatürk International airport.

**Contemporary İstanbul Arts Fair** Ⓦ www.contemporaryistanbul.com.com. Week-long exhibition in the Lütfi Kırdar Congress and Exhibition Centre, showcasing Turkish and international artists.

### October

**Akbank International Jazz Festival** Two-week festival concentrating on traditional jazz, with performers such as Dave Holland and Henry Threadgill. Events include film screenings, informal jamming sessions and drum workshops. Varied venues include the Byzantine church of Aya Irene and the Babylon Performance Centre in Beyoğlu.
**Filmeki** Week-long film festival brings the pick of the crop from Cannes, Sundance and Berlin to İstanbul, hosted by the Emek Sineması (see p.221).

### November

**Efes Pilsen Blues Festival** Two-day late-night blues festival – a showcase of new local talent and famous foreign bands, it's very popular with middle-class Turks, so book well in advance. Tours all of Turkey and abroad, so check the İstanbul dates do not fall in either Oct or Dec.

# Travel essentials

## Crime and personal safety

İstanbul is undoubtedly far safer than most large European or North American cities, and cases of mugging and assault against tourists are rare. Having said this, the crime rate is soaring, due in part to the increasing disparity between rich and poor. Take the same precautions you would in any European city and you should be OK. Bear in mind that all police are armed and, despite recent improvements in training and transparency, are generally feared by the locals.

### Trouble

For the average visitor, **pickpocketing** is the main cause for concern: be particularly careful around Sirkeci station, the Eminönü waterfront, the Grand Bazaar, Aksaray and Taksim (especially at night). You should also be careful on public transport, particularly when it is crowded. Be wary of the gangs of street kids hawking packs of tissues and the like – they'll jostle you while an accomplice empties your pockets. A daypack worn on your back is an easy target. Either lock it with a small lock, or carry it on your front. Women should wear handbags across their bodies to make it more difficult to snatch, and keep a firm hold of your camera. Single women should be careful in Taksim and Beyoğlu at night, and both sexes should be aware of the bad reputation of Tarlabaşı (which parallels İstiklal Caddesi in Beyoğlu), where low-lifers are more in evidence than elsewhere and sexual harassment (to women from men; to men

from some transvestites and transsexuals) is a problem.

Lone males heading out for the night should be wary of **confidence tricksters**. The usual scenario is to be approached by a friendly Turkish male, who'll suggest a good club or bar to go to. In the bar, there are (surprise, surprise) some attractive females, who your "friend" suggests buying drinks for. When the bill comes (to you), it can run into hundreds of euros. Even if you don't have enough cash on you, you'll be forced to pay with your credit card. In cases like this, it is very difficult to prove criminal intent – use your common sense and avoid the situation arising. The **spiking of drinks** is also on the increase: make sure you buy your own drinks if you have any doubts at all about whom you're with.

To avoid the wrath of the local populace (and possibly the police as well) never **insult Atatürk or Turkey**, and don't deface, degrade, or tear up currency or the flag. Public drunkenness in general is frowned upon and will be considered an aggravating, not a mitigating factor should you run into trouble. Try not to be drawn into **serious disputes**, since while things rarely turn violent in Turkey, when they do they can turn very violent – if anybody seems to be insulting or provoking you, walk away.

### Police

The police you're most likely to have any dealing with are the blue-uniformed **Polis**, the main force both in İstanbul and in towns and cities across the country. There's a tourist police centre at Yerebatan Cad 6 (☎0212/527 4503) in Sultanahmet with some English-speaking officers. The **Trafik Polis**, recognized by their white caps and two-toned vehicles, are a branch of this service and their main responsibility seems to be controlling intersections and doing spot-checks on vehicles at approaches to towns. İstanbul has a rapid-response squad of red-and-black-uniformed motorbike police known as the **Yunus Polis**; they are generally courteous and helpful to tourists and may speak some English. In the towns, you're also likely to see the **Belediye Zabıtası**, the navy-clad market police, who patrol the markets and bazaars to ensure that tradesmen aren't ripping off customers – approach them directly if you have reason for complaint.

In general, Turkish police have had a bad reputation, but things are beginning to change. Once low-paid and ill-trained, their pay has risen substantially (reducing corruption) in recent years, and graduate-intake programmes have raised the overall level of education of the police force. The "glass-walls" policy (designed to make the police more accountable for their actions) was introduced, at least partially, to satisfy the Europeans as Turkey strives for full EU membership, and as a result, attitudes towards suspects have improved considerably. **If you are arrested** for any reason, stay polite and be patient – getting irate tends to be counterproductive. You have **the right to make a phone call** to a friend, hotelier or consul.

## Health

Turkey does not have reciprocal heath arrangements with other countries, making health insurance mandatory. There are no vaccination requirements as such, though you should consult your doctor before travelling.

It's quite possible you'll suffer a mild bout of diarrhoea in İstanbul, particularly (though not only) if you eat from street stalls. **Tap water** is heavily chlorinated but best avoided – stick to the bottled water on sale everywhere. As a precaution take anti-diarrhoea tablets with you (you'll be able to buy a locally produced variant if you forget). Lomotil or Imodium, trade names for the antiparastaltic diphenoxylate, are easily available in Turkey, though they block you up rather than kill the bug that ails you. Flagyll, on sale locally, is good if you go down with a more virulent stomach bug, but avoid drinking alcohol when taking it. In restaurants, avoid dishes that look as if they have been standing around and make sure meat and fish are well grilled. Don't, whatever you do, eat stuffed mussels in summer. If you're struck down, the best thing is to let the bug run its course and drink lots of fluids, including re-hydrating salts (Geo-Oral is a locally available brand). Eating plain white rice and yoghurt also helps. Stubborn cases

will need a course of antibiotics – pharmacists are trained to recognize symptoms and you don't need a prescription for antibiotics. In theory, a state clinic (Develet Polykliniği) will treat foreigners for a very small fee.

**Rabies** is prevalent in Turkey, and İstanbul has its share of street dogs and cats. Be wary of any animal that bites, scratches or licks you, particularly if it's behaving erratically. First aid involves flushing a wound with soap and water after encouraging limited bleeding. Then go straight to a state clinic (within 72hrs), where you should be given an injection (free of charge), the first of six, most of which you will probably need to have back in your home country. The chances of getting bitten are remote, the chances of the animal actually having rabies extremely small, but if you're paranoid you could consider having a rabies vaccination before you visit.

## Medical treatment

There are thousands of **pharmacies** (*eczane*) across İstanbul. Staff may know some English or German and are trained to diagnose simple complaints, take blood pressure, and the like. They also dispense medicines that normally require a prescription, such as antibiotics. Medication prices are low, but bring your prescription to find the (probably locally produced) drug that best matches your needs. Pharmacies also sell **birth-control pills** (*doğum kontrol hapı*), **condoms** (*preservatif*; the slang term is *kılıf*, meaning "hood") and **tampons** (Orkid is the best domestic brand). **Night-duty pharmacies**, often found near main hospitals, are known as *nöbet(ci)*; a list of the current rota is posted in Turkish in every chemist's front window, as "Nöbetçi Eczaneleri". For more serious ailments, you'll find well-trained **doctors** in İstanbul and the larger towns and cities. As the state sector hospitals are overcrowded and under-funded, it's preferable to go to an Özel Hastane or private hospital.

### Hospitals

**Alman Hastanesi (German Hospital)** Sıraselviler Cad 119, Taksim ⓣ0212/293 2150, ⓦwww.almanhastanesi.com.tr. Reliable and well-run hospital, it also has a dental and eye clinic. Staff are proficient in English but the administration is German. Consultations around 140TL.

**Amerikan Hastanesi (American Hospital)** Güzelbahçe Sok 20, Nişantaşı ⓣ0212/311 2000, ⓦwww.amerikanhastanesi.com. Very good reputation, long established and with good equipment and well-trained staff, it also has a dental clinic. Consultations around 120TL.

**Taksim İlkyardİm Hastanesi (Taksim Emergency Hospital)** Sıraselviler Cad 112, Taksim ⓣ0212/ 4300. State-run and deals with emergencies only; patients are often referred to another hospital.

### Dentists

Alternatives to the practices in the German and American hospitals (above), both with English-speaking staff, are:

**Prodent-Can Ergene** Valikonağı Cad 109/5, Nişantaşİ ⓣ0212/230 4635.

**Reha Sezgin** Halaskargazi Cad 48/9, Harbiye ⓣ0212/240 3322.

## Insurance

There are not yet any reciprocal health-care privileges between Turkey and the EU, so it's essential to take out an insurance policy before travelling, to cover against theft, loss, illness or injury. Before paying for a new policy, however, check whether you are already covered: some all-risks homeowners' or renters' insurance policies may cover your possessions when overseas, and many private medical schemes (such as BUPA and WPA) offer coverage extensions for abroad.

A specialist travel-insurance company can sell you a suitable policy, or consider the travel insurance deal we offer (see box, p.48). A typical travel-insurance policy usually provides cover for the loss of baggage, tickets and – up to a certain limit – cash, cards or traveller's cheques, as well as cancellation or curtailment of your journey.

Many policies can be chopped and changed to eliminate coverage you don't need – for example, sickness and accident benefits can often be excluded or included at will. If you do take **medical coverage**, ascertain whether benefits will be paid as treatment proceeds or only after your return home, and whether there is a 24-hour medical emergency number. When securing baggage cover, make sure that the per-article limit – typically under £500/€750 – will cover your most valuable possession, otherwise see

**Rough Guides travel insurance**

Rough Guides has teamed up with Columbus Direct to offer you tailor-made **travel insurance**. Products include a low-cost **backpacker** option for long stays; a **short break** option for city getaways; a typical **holiday package** option; and others. There are also annual **multi-trip** policies for those who travel regularly. Different sports and activities (trekking, skiing, etc) can usually be included.

See our website (Ⓦ www.roughguides.com/website/shop) for eligibility and purchasing options. Alternatively, UK residents can call ⓣ 0870/033 9988, Australians ⓣ 1300/669 999 and New Zealanders ⓣ 0800/559 911. All other nationalities should call ⓣ +44 870/890 2843.

about getting it covered under a homeowner policy. Travel agents and tour operators are likely to require travel insurance when you book a package holiday – you're not obliged to take theirs, though you may be required to sign a declaration saying that you already have a policy with a particular company.

If you need to make a medical **claim**, you should keep receipts for medicines and treatment, and in the event you have anything **stolen or lost**, you must obtain an official statement from the police (or the airline that lost your bags). In the wake of growing numbers of fraudulent claims, most insurers won't even entertain a claim unless you have a police report.

## Laundry

Most hotels have a laundry service, and some of the major hotels offer services to non-guests, at a price – the one at the *Ceylan Intercontinental* in Taksim (ⓣ 0212/368 4444) is 24 hours. There are no coin-operated laundries in the city, but there are plenty of dry cleaners, some of which will do your laundry.

## Left luggage and lost property

There are left-luggage (*emanet*) facilities at Atatürk International airport (12TL per day for a normal-sized bag), where you hand your (locked) baggage over. At Sirkeci station in Emiönü, there are left-luggage lockers.

If you lose, or have something stolen, report it to the tourism police at Yerebatan Cad 6 (ⓣ 0212/527 4503) in Sultanahmet.

## Smoking

The old saying "smokes like a Turk" is backed up by figures to prove it is a fairly accurate assessment, with over forty percent of the adult population (around 25 million) indulging the nicotine habit. Yet things are beginning to change. Smoking was banned on public transport and in airports, bus terminals and train stations back in 1997, and, much to everyone's surprise, the law is, more or less, adhered to. From July 2009, it was prohibited in all public buildings, and all enclosed public spaces including bars, cafés, restaurants, clubs and the like.

## Time

Turkey is two hours ahead of GMT, seven ahead of EST and ten ahead of PST. It is in the same time zone as South Africa, and seven hours behind Perth, nine behind Sydney and eleven behind Wellington. Daylight saving runs from the last Sunday in March to the last Sunday in October.

## Toilets

In the majority of İstanbul homes, **Western-style toilets** are the norm – this is also true of those in most cafés, restaurants, bars, clubs, cinemas, tourist sites and so on. The only difference between them and the ones you're used to at home is the small pipe fitted at the rear rim of the basin – which serves the same purpose as a bidet. The tap to turn it on is usually awkwardly located, at low level, on the wall behind the loo. The waste bins provided are for "used" toilet paper – blockages are not uncommon.

In poorer, less visited neighbourhoods, however, **squat toilets** are still the norm. This is particularly true of those attached to mosques – in out of the way parts of the city, the only "public" toilet you'll be able to find. There's always a tap and plastic jug right

next to the toilet for washing the unmentionables but be warned: few provide paper, so carry some around with you. An attendant at the entrance will divest you of between 50 kuruş and a lira on your way out and, in return, give you a tissue and splash of cologne on your hands.

## Travellers with disabilities

Both Atatürk International and Sabiha Gökçen airports have wheelchairs and wheelchair-accessible toilets. **Getting around** İstanbul by the light railway, metro and tram is possible, as they are at least, theoretically, wheelchair friendly, although at peak times the carriages are terribly crowded and getting access to some of the stations can be tricky. Some of the more modern buses have a ramp and low door but again can be very overcrowded and the drivers less than patient. The metro running from Taksim Square north is the most wheelchair accessible, but of little interest to most visitors to the city. Public transport is theoretically free for disabled travellers but in practice, given the language barriers, may be difficult to obtain. Many of the city's pavements are broken and uneven, or cobbled, making things awkward – not to mention the number of steep hills.

The most **accessible sites** for the physically impaired are the Rahmi Koç Industrial Museum, İstanbul Modern and the Pera Museum. The Topkapı Palace and Aya Sofya are partially accessible, the Blue Mosque and Yerebatan Cistern impossible.

## Women and sexual harassment

Turkish women occupy all positions in society, from head-scarved housewives to devout Muslims robed head to toe in the all-enveloping *çaşaf*, and from secularized and "liberated" doctors living a single and independent life to high-school girls in too-short skirts and Converse baseball boots. Taking away the extremes, however, this is a socially conservative society and its women reflect this. Few go out to bars or clubs on their own, and though they may wear tight jeans and singlets, miniskirts and the like are still relatively rare. Wear jeans, trousers or sensible skirts, avoid eye contact with men, and try and look as confident and purposeful as possible. In conservative areas and when entering mosques or churches, make sure you're appropriately covered.

If you do get harassed, don't suffer it alone – make a public scene to elicit the support of bystanders. Using Turkish to get your message across, such as "Ayıp!" ("Shame!") or "Beni rahatsız ediyorsun" ("You're disturbing me"), or the stronger "Defol!" ("Piss off!") or "Bırak beni" ("Leave me alone") may help in theory, but only if you don't mangle the pronunciation. "İmdat!" ("Help!") is more straightforward and should enlist you some aid.

## Working in İstanbul

Unemployment is very high in Turkey, and jobs in all but the most specialist fields are hard to come by. The bureaucracy involved in getting work and residence permits is also onerous and relies on proof that the establishment or company cannot find someone to do the job from within the country – which is why most of the foreigners working in İstanbul are **teaching English** as a foreign language in a private school or college. There's a big demand for teachers in these schools, partly because of the high status accorded to learning English, partly because working conditions are not great and foreign-staff turnover tends to be high. Teaching posts for the bigger outfits are advertised in *The Guardian's* educational section and the *Times Educational Supplement* in the UK, in the *International Herald Tribune* and the *Turkish Daily News* in Turkey, or check the expat website Ⓦ www.mymerhaba.com. The pay is merely adequate (usually around 1500TL per month) but free accommodation is the norm. In all but the top places, students tend to be rather spoilt and lacking in motivation and the management dictatorial and far more concerned with keeping parents, rather than their staff, happy. The other area where jobs are relatively easy to come by is as a **nanny** – check Ⓦ www.anglonannies.com.

If you find legal work, you will need a **residence permit**, though your employer should take care of this for you. It can still be worth getting a residence permit

should you wish to stay in the city for a year or so and not work (perhaps to study, learn the language, etc). At 500TL for twelve months, it's not cheap, but it saves having to leave the country every three months, as you would have to if you were on a tourist visa. Current requirements include a valid passport, a notarized translation of your passport, six passport-sized photographs, evidence that you can support yourself (£2500 in a Turkish bank account), and the necessary form filled in in duplicate – and plenty of patience when visiting the Security Police (Emniyet Müdürlüğü) who issue the permit.

# The City

# The City


1 Sultanahmet ..... 53

2 Sirkeci, Eminönü and Tahtakale ..... 80

3 The Grand Bazaar and around ..... 88

4 The northwest quarter ..... 101

5 The land walls ..... 113

6 Beyoğlu, Taksim and the waterfront districts ..... 123

7 Beşiktaş and Ortaköy ..... 145

8 Asian İstanbul ..... 152

9 The Bosphorus and the Black Sea resorts ..... 160

1

# Sultanahmet

The heart of old, imperial İstanbul, compact **Sultanahmet** is home to the city's most famous attractions: the **Topkapı Palace**, centre of the Ottoman Empire, commanding a magnificent position on a wooded promontory overlooking the Bosphorus and Sea of Marmara; the monumental Sultanahmet Camii (better known in English as the **Blue Mosque**), with its six slender minarets and mighty dome; and, facing the mosque, the greatest legacy of the Byzantine Empire, the church of **Aya Sofya**.

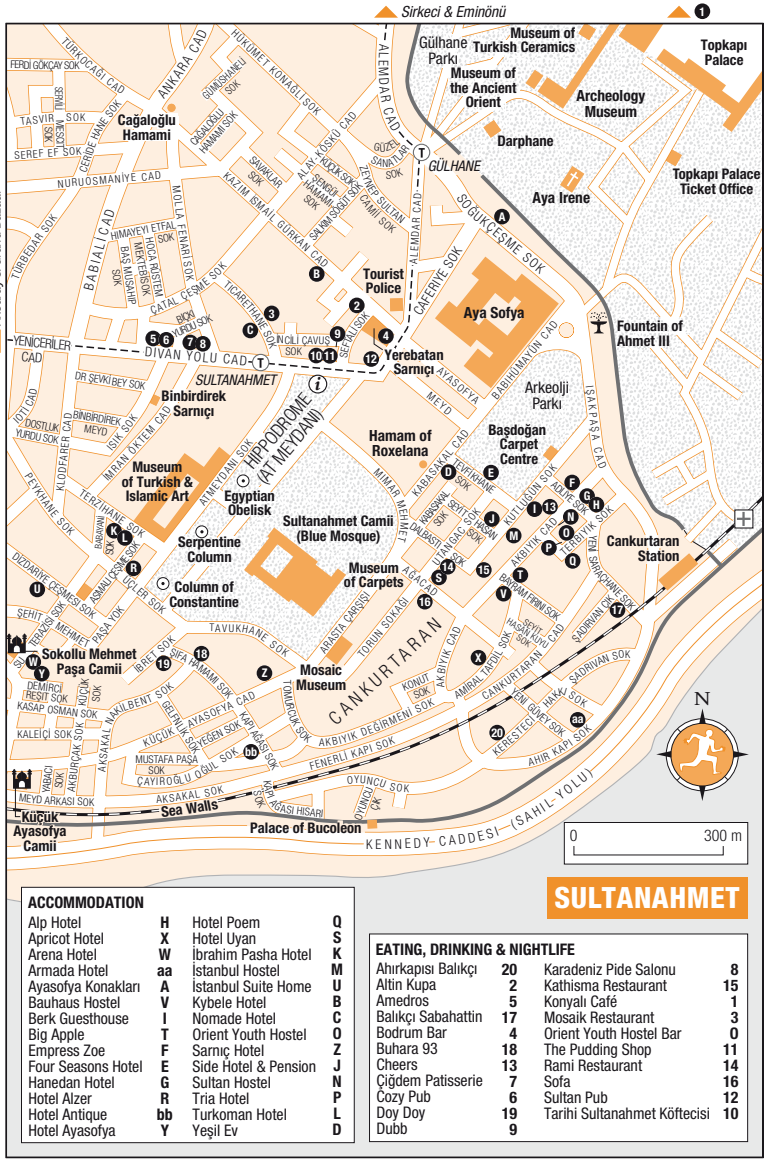
Further legacies of the Byzantine era lie just north of the Blue Mosque. The **Hippodrome**, where chariots raced and mobs rioted, is one of the oldest monuments in the city, while the **Yerebatan** and **Binbirdirek underground cisterns**, constructed at a time when the water shortages that now plague İstanbul were entirely unknown, are part of a superb water-supply system that ran right across the city. There are some excellent museums here, too, notably the **Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art**, housed in the former İbrahim Paşa Sarayı, and the **Archeology Museum**, featuring a superb array of finds from both Anatolia and former Ottoman domains.

South of the major sightseeing area, the steep, narrow streets running down from Cankurtaran to the Sea of Marmara are noteworthy for their surviving Ottoman houses, whilst a little to the southwest are a couple of minor architectural masterpieces, the mosques of **Küçük Aya Sofya Camii** and **Sokullu Mehmet Paşa Camii**.

Sultanahmet attracts millions of visitors annually and, unsurprisingly, tourism is now its *raison d'être*. Parting visitors from their hard-earned cash has become something of an art form here – be prepared to fend off the persistent **hustlers** who gather around the Hippodrome and Divan Yolu, whose main aim is to draw you into one of the many carpet shops, where, if you're not careful, you'll waste hours looking at rugs rather than sights and quite likely end up with an unwanted floor-covering to boot. Despite the huge numbers of tourists, this is still a conservative part of the city, so for nightlife (and to meet the locals, who have been driven out of the area by rising rents), you'll need to head across the Galata Bridge and into Beyoğlu.

## Aya Sofya

For almost a thousand years, **Aya Sofya**, or Haghia Sophia (Aya Sofya Müzesi; daily except Mon 9am–7pm, last entry at 6pm, upper galleries close at 6.30pm; 20TL), was the largest enclosed space in the world, designed to impress the




**ACCOMMODATION**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Alp Hotel | H | Hotel Poem | Q |
| Apricot Hotel | X | Hotel Uyan | S |
| Arena Hotel | W | İbrahim Pasha Hotel | K |
| Armada Hotel | aa | İstanbul Hostel | M |
| Ayasofya Konakları | A | İstanbul Suite Home | U |
| Bauhaus Hostel | V | Kybele Hotel | B |
| Berk Guesthouse | I | Nomade Hotel | C |
| Big Apple | T | Orient Youth Hostel | O |
| Empress Zoe | F | Sarnıç Hotel | Z |
| Four Seasons Hotel | E | Side Hotel & Pension | J |
| Hanedan Hotel | G | Sultan Hostel | N |
| Hotel Alzer | R | Tria Hotel | P |
| Hotel Antique | bb | Turkoman Hotel | L |
| Hotel Ayasofya | Y | Yeşil Ev | D |

**EATING, DRINKING & NIGHTLIFE**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ahırkapısı Balıkçı | 20 | Karadeniz Pide Salonu | 8 |
| Altin Kupa | 2 | Kathisma Restaurant | 15 |
| Amedros | 5 | Konyalı Café | 1 |
| Balıkçı Sabahattin | 17 | Mosaik Restaurant | 3 |
| Bodrum Bar | 4 | Orient Youth Hostel Bar | O |
| Buhara 93 | 18 | The Pudding Shop | 11 |
| Cheers | 13 | Rami Restaurant | 14 |
| Çiğdem Patisserie | 7 | Sofa | 16 |
| Cozy Pub | 6 | Sultan Pub | 12 |
| Doy Doy | 19 | Tarihi Sultanahmet Köftecisi | 10 |
| Dubb | 9 | | |

strength and wealth of the Byzantine emperors upon their own subjects and visiting foreign dignitaries alike. Located between the Topkapı Palace and the Blue Mosque on the ancient acropolis, the first hill of Istanbul, the church dominated the city skyline for a millennium, until the domes and minarets of the city's mosques began to challenge its eminence in the sixteenth century.

Considering the vicissitudes undergone by the building over the centuries, it's perhaps surprising to find Aya Sofya still standing at all. Despite much work in

recent years, which has improved the formerly neglected brick-and-stonework exterior, restoration is ongoing – at the time of writing, part of the interior of the central dome was still scaffolded.



### Some history

Aya Sofya, "the Church of the Divine Wisdom", is the third church of this name to stand on the site; it was commissioned in the sixth century by Emperor Justinian after its predecessor had been razed to the ground in the Nika riots of 532 (see box, p.71). The architects, **Anthemius of Tralles** and **Isidore of Miletus**, were to create a building combining elements in a manner and on a scale completely unknown to the Byzantine world, and no imitation or rival would subsequently be attempted until the sixteenth century. It remained an important symbol of Byzantine power long after the empire itself had been destroyed and became the inspiration, not to say obsession, of the greatest of all Ottoman architects, Mimar Sinan, who devoted his lifetime to the attempt to surpass its technical achievements.

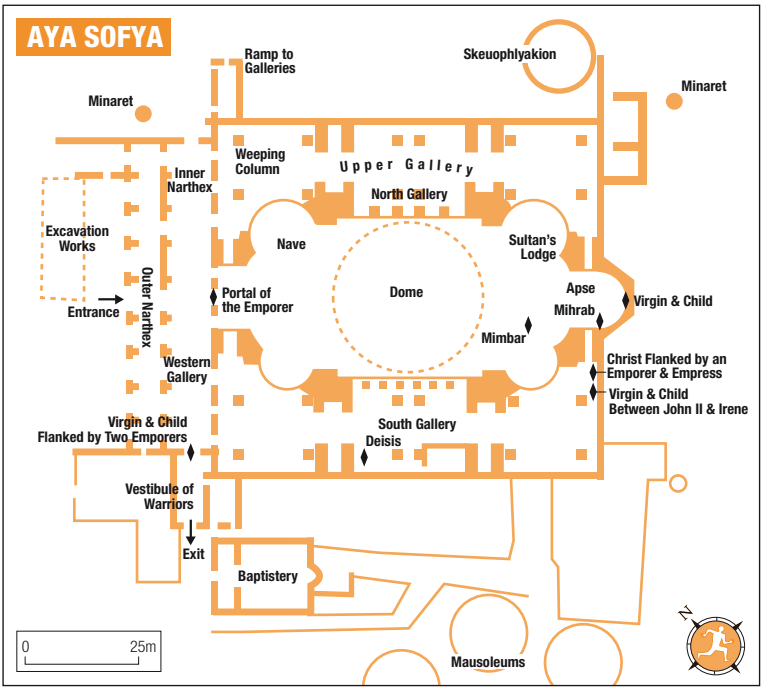
For a thirty-metre **dome** to hover over a seemingly empty space, rather than being supported by solid walls, was unprecedented, and the sheer dimensions of the projected structure meant that the architects had no sure way of knowing that their plans would succeed. The building was initially constructed in five years, but twenty years and several earthquakes later the central dome collapsed and the task of rebuilding it went to **Isidorus the Younger**, the nephew of one of the original architects. He increased the height of the external buttresses and of the dome itself and, less certainly, removed large windows from the north and south tympanum arches, thus initiating the gradual blockage of windows that has resulted in the dim half-light in which visitors now grope.

The worst desecration was in 1204, when it was ransacked by Catholic soldiers during the **Fourth Crusade**. The altar was broken up and shared among the captors, the hangings were torn, and mules were brought in to help carry off silver and gilt carvings. A prostitute was seated on the throne of the patriarch and she "sang and danced in the church, to ridicule the hymns and processions of the orientals". Two and a half centuries later, in 1452, the Byzantine Church reluctantly accepted union with the Catholics in the hope that Western powers would come to the aid of Constantinople against the Turks, but they were too late. On May 29, 1453, the city was captured. **Mehmet the Conqueror** rode to the church of Aya Sofya, had the building cleared of relics and said his first prayer there on the following Friday. Later, a wooden minaret was built at the church's southwest corner, not to be replaced until the late sixteenth century, when Mimar Sinan was called upon to restore the building.

Extensive restorations were carried out on the mosaics in the mid-nineteenth century by the Swiss **Fossati brothers**, but due to Muslim sensitivities the mosaics were later covered over again. The angels that the Fossatis had painted in the west pendentives of the nave were even given medallions to hide their faces. The building continued to function as a **mosque** until 1932, when further renovations were carried out, and in 1934 Aya Sofya was opened as a **museum**.

## The building

The main body of the building approximates to a **domed basilica**, with a basic octagonal shape split in two and a domed rectangle inserted. Thus Aya Sofya is both centralized and domed – forms that were gaining in popularity for prestigious monuments of the sixth century – but it retains a longitudinal axis and side aisles. At the diagonals of the octagon are semicircular niches (exedrae).




The galleries, which follow the line of these exedrae around the building, are supported by rows of columns and by four piers, which are also the main support of the dome itself.

Most interesting of the internal decorations are the marbles and the mosaics. Look closely, however, and you'll see that many of the "marble" wall panels are actually trompe-l'oeil, covering areas that would originally have borne frescoes or mosaics. Of the **marbles** that remain, some are purple-coloured Egyptian porphyry, a rare volcanic rock that was not quarried at the time, so must have been pilfered from elsewhere. The columns supporting the galleries and the tympanum walls are verd-antique marble, while those in the upper gallery of the exedrae are Thessalian marble. These ranges of columns, above and below the gallery, are not aligned one above the other, an irregularity thought outrageously daring and structurally unsound by contemporaries. Of those in the exedrae, the poet Paul the Silentiary wrote: "One wonders at the power of him, who bravely set six columns over two, and has not trembled to fix their bases over empty air." Upstairs in the western gallery a large circle of green Thessalian marble marks the position of the **throne of the empress**.

Byzantine **mosaics** were designed to be seen by lamp- or candlelight, which shows off the workmanship to its best advantage: flickering light reflected in pieces of glass or gold, which had been carefully embedded at minutely disparate angles, give an appearance of movement and life to the mosaics. What remains of the **abstract mosaics**, and of the large areas of plain gold that covered the underside of the dome and other large expanses of wall and ceiling, dates from the sixth century. Some of the prettiest of this work can be seen under the arches of the south gallery and in the narthex (the entrance porch).

The **figurative mosaics**, all of which date from after the Iconoclastic era (726–843), are located in the narthex, the nave, the upper gallery and the vestibule. Some of the most impressive are in the south gallery where, beyond a pair of false marble doors on the west face of the pier, there's a comparatively well-lit mosaic of a **Deisis**, depicting Christ, the Virgin and St John the Baptist. Although this mosaic is partly damaged, the three faces are all well preserved: that of John the Baptist is especially expressive, betraying great pain and suffering, while the Virgin has downcast eyes and an expression of modesty and humility.

On the east wall of the south gallery, contiguous with the apse, is a **mosaic of Christ flanked by an emperor and empress**. The inscriptions over their heads read "Zoë, the most pious Augusta" and "Constantine in Christ, the Lord Autocrat, faithful Emperor of the Romans, Monomachus". It is believed that the two figures are those of Constantine IX Monomachus and Empress Zoë, who ruled Byzantium in her own right with her sister Theodora before she married Constantine, her third husband.

The other mosaic in the south gallery, dating from 1118, depicts the **Virgin and Child between Emperor John II Comnenus and Empress Irene**, and their son Prince Alexius, added later. This is a livelier, less conventional work than that of Zoë and Constantine, with faces full of expression: Prince Alexius, who died soon after this portrait was executed, is depicted as a wan and sickly youth, his lined face presaging his premature death.

Other mosaics include a **Virgin and Child** in the apse and, one of the most beautiful of all the Aya Sofya mosaics, a **Virgin and Child flanked by two emperors**. The latter is located in the Vestibule of Warriors, now serving as an exit, and to see it you have to turn around and look upwards after you have passed through the magnificent **Portal of the Emperor**. Dated to the last quarter of the tenth century, the mosaic shows Emperor Justinian, to the right of the Virgin, offering a model of Aya Sofya, while Emperor Constantine offers a model of the city of Constantinople. This is the only mosaic that has been properly lit, and the effect must be near to that intended by the artists.

Also worth noting is the famous brass-clad **weeping column**, located in the northwest corner of the aisle and usually identifiable by the crowd it attracts. A legend dating from at least 1200 tells how St Gregory the Miracle-worker appeared here – the moisture subsequently seeping from the column has been believed to cure a wide range of conditions.

What is left of the structures from Aya Sofya's time as a **mosque** are a *mihrab*, a *mimber*, a sultan's loge, and the enormous wooden plaques that bear sacred Islamic names of God, the Prophet Mohammed and the first four caliphs. These and the inscription on the dome by the calligrapher Azzet Efendi all date from the time of the restoration by the Fossati brothers.

## The Topkapı Palace

The **Topkapı Palace** (Topkapı Sarayı; daily except Tues 9am–7pm; 20TL, free to enter the first court) was both the symbolic and political centre of the Ottoman Empire for nearly four centuries, until the removal of the imperial retinue to Dolmabahçe, by Sultan Abdülmecid I in 1853. It's a beautiful setting in which to wander and contemplate the majesty of the Ottoman sultanate, as well as the cruelty exemplified by institutions such as the Harem and "the Cage".

Originally known as *Sarayı Cedid*, or New Palace, Topkapı was built between 1459 and 1465 as the seat of government of the newly installed Ottoman regime. It was not at first a residence: Mehmet the Conqueror had already built what would become known as the Old Palace on the present site of İstanbul University and even after he himself moved, his harem stayed on at the old site.

In accordance with Islamic tradition, the palace consists of a collection of buildings arranged around a series of courtyards, similar to the Alhambra in Granada or a Moghul palace in India. Although this creates an initial impression of disorder, in fact the arrangement is meticulously logical. The **first court** was the service area of the palace and open to all, while most of the second court and its attendant buildings were devoted to the Divan, or Council of State, and to those who had business with it. The pavilions of judges were located at the **Ortakapı** (the entrance to the palace proper, between the first and second courts), in accordance with the tradition that justice should be dispensed at the gate of the palace.

The **third court** was mainly given over to the palace school, an important imperial institution devoted to the training of civil servants, and it is only in the **fourth court** that the serious business of state gives way to the more pleasurable aspects of life. Around the attractive **gardens** here are a number of pavilions erected by successive emperors in celebration of their victories. Here, the glorious views and sunsets could be enjoyed in privileged retreat from their four-thousand-member retinue.

The various adjustments made to the structure and function of the buildings were indicative of the power shifts in the Ottoman Empire over the centuries. During the "Rule of the Harem" in the sixteenth century, for example, a passageway was opened between the Harem and the Divan, while in the eighteenth century, when the power of the sultan had declined, the offices of state were transferred away from the "Eye of the Sultan" (the window in the Divan through which a sultan could monitor proceedings) to the gateway that led to the palaces of the Grand Vizier, known as the Sublime Port.

## The first court and Aya Irene

Entering the first court from the street (Babıhümayun Caddesi) through Mehmet the Conqueror's **Bab-ı Hümayün**, the great defensive imperial gate opposite the fountain of Ahmet III, it's hard to believe that this is the outer courtyard of a former imperial palace: all is taxi ranks and coaches and their disembarking tour parties. Such a melee, however, is entirely in keeping with the origins of the first courtyard, which, as the palace's service area, was always open to the general public. The **palace bakeries** are behind a wall to the right of the courtyard, and the buildings of the **imperial mint and outer treasury** (all currently closed) are behind the wall north of the church of Aya Irene. In front of Aya Irene were located the quarters of the straw-weavers and carriers of silver pitchers, around a central courtyard in which the palace firewood was stored. The church itself was variously employed as an armoury and storage space for archeological treasures.

Today, **Aya Irene**, "the Church of the Divine Peace", is generally closed to visitors. The best chance to see the interior is when it opens for occasional exhibitions or concerts, including the summer İstanbul music festival. The original church was one of the oldest in the city, but it was rebuilt along with Aya Sofya after being burnt down in the Nika riots of 532. Around the semicircular apse is the only **synthronon** (seating space for clergy in the apse of a church) in İstanbul to have survived the Byzantine era. It has six tiers of seats

▲ Aya Irene

with an ambulatory running behind the fourth tier. Most of the interior is now plain, exposed brickwork, and even the plastered apse is decorated with nothing more than a crude cross.

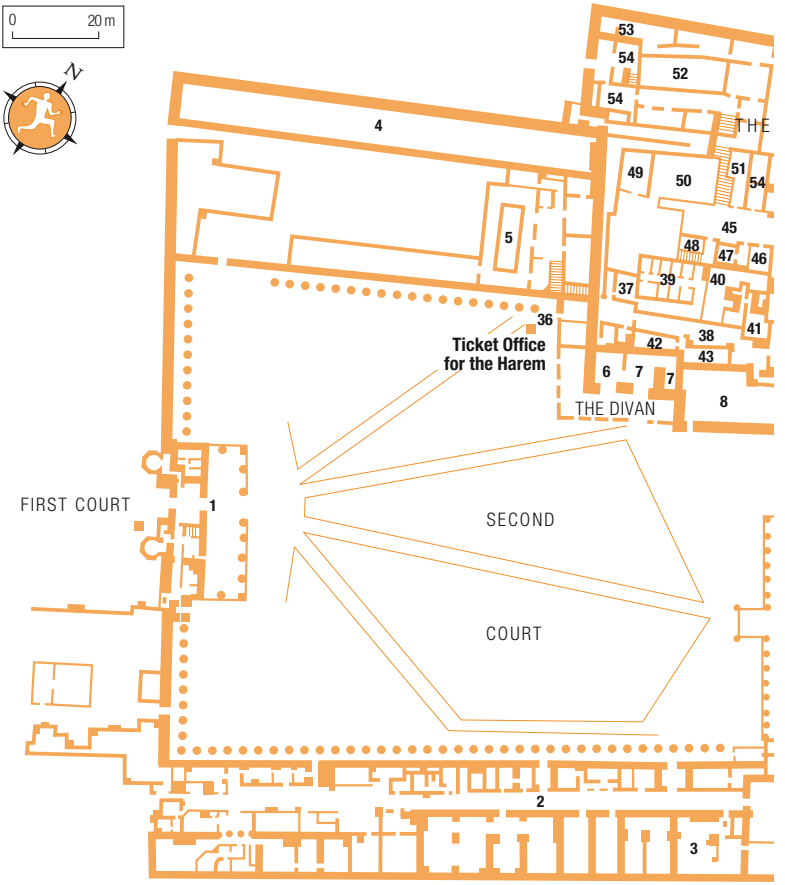
## Ortakapı, the second court and the Divan

To reach the second court you pass through the Bab-üs Selam, "the Gate of Salutations", otherwise known as the **Ortakapı**, or middle gate (where the main ticket office is). Entering through Ortakapı, with the gateway to the third court straight ahead of you, the Privy Stables of Mehmet II (closed to the public) are on your immediate left, while beyond them are the buildings of the Divan and the Inner Treasury and the entrance to the Harem. Opposite the Divan, on the right side of the courtyard, is the kitchen area.

The gardens between the paths radiating from the Ortakapı are planted with ancient cypresses and plane trees, rose bushes and lawns. Originally, they would also have been resplendent with peacocks, gazelles and, most importantly, fountains. Running water, considered to have almost mystical properties by Muslims, was supplied in great quantity to the palace from the Byzantine cistern of Yerebatan Sarnıçı (see p.70). This **second court** would have been the scene of pageantry during state ceremonies, when the sultan would occupy his throne beneath the Bab-üs Saadet. At all times, even on one of the three days of the week when the courtyard was filled with petitioners to the Divan, silence reigned here, as people obeyed the rules of conduct imposed in the presence – actual or potential – of the sultan.

As you enter the buildings of the **Divan**, to the left of the court, you'll see the metal grille in the Council Chamber (the first room on the left), called "the

# TOPKAPI PALACE




1 Ortakapı or Middle Gate
2 Kitchens and Cooks' Quarters (Porcelain & Glass Collection)
3 Reconstructed Kitchen
4 Stables and Harness Rooms
5 Barrack of the Halberdiers of the Long Tresses
6 Hall of the Divan
7 Offices of the Divan
8 Inner Treasury (Arms & armour collection)
9 Gate of Felicity (Bab-üs Saadet)
10 Quarters of the White Eunuchs (Costume collection)
11 Throne Room
12 Ahmet III Library
13 Library (Mosque of the School)
14 Harem Mosque
15 Court of the Room of the Robe
16 Room of the Robe of the Prophet
17 Rooms of the Relics of the Prophet
18 Hall of the Treasury (Sultans' Portraits & Miniature Collection)
19 Hall of the Pantry (Museum Directorate)
20 Imperial Treasury (Pavilion of Mehmet II)
21 Disrobing Chamber of Selim II Hamam
22 Site of Selim II Hamam
23 Site of Selim II Hamam Boilers
24 Hall of the Expeditionary Force
25 Circumcision Köşkü
26 Terrace and Bower

27 Pool
28 Baghdad Köşkü
29 Pool
30 Revan Köşkü
31 Tulip Gardens of Ahmet III
32 Mustafa Paşa Köşkü
33 Physician's Tower
34 Mecidiye Köşkü
35 Third Gate
36 Entry to the Harem (Carriage Gate)
37 Mosque of the Black Eunuchs
38 Court of the Black Eunuchs
39 Barrack of the Black Eunuchs
40 Princes' School
41 Quarters of the Chief Black Eunuchs
42 Quarters of the Treasurer
43 Quarters of the Chamberlain
44 Aviary Gate (Kuşhane Kapisi)
45 Courtyard of the Women of the Harem
46 Kitchen of the Women
47 Hamam of the Women
48 Stairs to Bedrooms
49 Laundry
50 Women's Dormitory
51 Apartments of Senior women
52 Court of Women's hospital
53 Hospital Hamam
54 Hospital Kitchen Quarters
55 Sultan Ahmet Kiosk
56 Harem Garden
57 Valide Sultan's Court
58 Valide Sultan's Dining Room
59 Valide Sultan's Bedroom
60 Valide Sultan's Hamam
61 Kadin's Quarters
62 Golden Road
63 Ahmet III Dining Room
64 Throne Room Within
65 The Sultan's Hamam
66 Osman III Terrace
67 Terrace of Selâmlik Garden
68 Apartment of the Selamlik (Sultan's Rooms)

Eye of the Sultan". Through this he could observe the proceedings of the Divan, where the eminent imperial councillors sat in session, and which took its name from the couch running around the three walls of the room. The building dates essentially from the reign of Mehmet the Conqueror, and the Council Chamber was restored to its sixteenth-century appearance in 1945, with some of the original İznik tiles and arabesque painting. The other two rooms of the Divan have retained the Rococo decorations of Ahmet III.

The **Divan tower** (two tours daily; ask at main ticket office for times) is visible from vantage points across the city. Rebuilt in 1825, the classical lines of the octagonal structure, with its tall windows between engaged Corinthian columns and its lead-covered conical spire, look rather out of place here, but it's certainly an impressive landmark and a nice foil for the domes of the Divan. The tours are strictly chaperoned: admission to the balconies is not allowed, but the panoramic Bosphorus views through the windows are exceptional.

Next to the Divan is another building from Mehmet the Conqueror's original palace, the **Inner Treasury**, a six-domed hall preceded by a double-domed vestibule and supported internally by three piers. The **arms and armour collection** here juxtaposes much exquisite craftsmanship with barbaric-looking exhibits, such as a seventeenth-century executioner's sword and some seven-foot-long double-handed swords of which wearied Europeans were relieved during one Turkish campaign or another. It's also interesting to compare the swords of various Ottoman sultans: that of the Conqueror appears

## The Cage

**The Cage** was adopted by Ahmet I as an alternative to fratricide, which had become institutionalized in the Ottoman Empire since the days of Beyazit II. To avoid wars of succession, Beyazit ruled that a sultan should execute his brothers upon his accession to the throne. The Cage was introduced as a way around this practice, but in the event proved a less than satisfactory solution. After the death of their father, the younger princes would be incarcerated along with deaf mutes and a *harem* of concubines, while their eldest brother acceded to the throne. They remained in the suite of rooms of the Harem known in Turkish as *Kafes* (the Cage) until such time as they were called upon to take power themselves. The concubines never left the Cage unless they became pregnant, and great care was taken to prevent this, either by the removal of their ovaries or by the use of pessaries, since if it did occur they were immediately drowned.

The decline of the Ottoman Empire has in part been attributed to the institution of the Cage. The sultans who spent any length of time there emerged crazed, avaricious and debauched. Osman II, for example, enjoyed archery, but only when using live targets, including prisoners of war and his own pages. He was assassinated by the janissaries, to be replaced by Mustafa I, who had all but died of starvation in the Cage and was even madder than his predecessor. He, too, was assassinated. The worst affected of all, however, was İbrahim, better known as Deli İbrahim (İbrahim the Mad). He spent 22 years in the Cage, and when they came to take him out he was so sure he was about to be assassinated that he had to be removed forcibly. His reign was characterized by sexual excess and political misrule (his mother, Köşem, once complained that there was not enough wood for the Harem fires and he responded by having his grand vizier executed). Eventually, in response to a rumour of *harem* intrigue, İbrahim had all bar two of his 280 concubines bound in sacks and thrown into the Bosphorus. According to one version of events, only one survived; wriggling free of her bonds she was rescued by a passing French ship and taken to Paris.

altogether more effective than the finely wrought example attributed to that patron of the arts, Süleyman the Magnificent.

Across the courtyard are the **palace kitchens and cooks' quarters**, with their magnificent rows of chimneys, best seen in profile from a distance (Kennedy Caddesi, which runs around the Marmara shore, is a particularly fine vantage point). Much of this complex was destroyed by fire in 1574, though the chimneys were reconstructed by Mimar Sinan, as were eight of the ten domes behind them (the two southernmost domes date to the reign of Mehmet the Conqueror). The ten kitchens, which had a staff of 1500, all served different purposes. The two at the far end, where sweets and *helva* were made, have been restored complete with a fascinating array of utensils. The other rooms house a collection of some of the finest porcelain in the world, an ever-changing display continually replenished from the vast Topkapı collection.

## The third court

As you pass through the **Bab-üs Saadet**, "the Gate of Felicity", the **Throne Room** is immediately in front of you. This building, mainly dating from the reign of Selim I, was where the sultan awaited the outcome of sessions of the Divan in order to give his assent or otherwise to their proposals. The grey marble building at the centre of the third courtyard, the **Ahmet III Library** (not generally open to the public), is restrained and sombre compared to his highly decorative fountain outside the gates of the palace.

The room to the right of the gate and Throne Room and library, southwest of the courtyard, is the **Hall of the Expeditionary Force**, sometimes referred to as the Hall of the Campaign Pages (Seferli Koğuşu), which houses a collection of embroidery and a very small selection from the imperial-costume collection. The latter includes a charming little outfit of Selim I's – red with yellow circles – prompting the question of where he could have acquired his epithet "the Grim". Behind the hall is the *hamam* of Selim II, who fell there in a drunken stupor and died later of his injuries.

## The Imperial Treasury

The **Imperial Treasury** is housed in the rooms that once functioned as the Pavilion of Mehmet II, which takes up most of the southeast side of the third courtyard, to the right of the entrance. The building is on two floors, and a colonnaded terrace leads from the courtyard into the lower rooms, whose interior plasterwork, including shell-shaped niches, stalactite capitals and ogee (slightly pointed) arches over the windows is typical of the fifteenth century. The first two rooms – the right-hand one of which was used as the *camekan* or disrobing chamber of the *hamam* of Selim II – are beautifully proportioned and domed. The last two are at right angles, with an attractive loggia at the angle where they meet.

The first room contains a number of highly wrought and extremely beautiful objects, including a delicate silver model of a palace complete with tiny birds in the trees, a present to Abdül Hamid II from Japan. The next two rooms – memorials to the excess and bad taste of the megalomaniacal – are always thronged and there are certainly plenty of thrills to be had if you like your gemstones big and your precious metals abundant. The big crowd-puller in room two is the **Topkapı Dagger**, which starred alongside Peter Ustinov in the Sunday-matinee classic *Topkapi*. A present from Mahmut I to Nadir Shah that was waylaid and brought back when news of the shah's death reached

Topkapı, the dagger is decorated with three enormous emeralds, one of which conceals a watch. In the third room, the **Spoonmaker's Diamond**, the fifth-largest diamond in the world, is invariably surrounded by a gawping crowd, which perhaps gives some impression of the effect it must have had during its first public appearance, adorning Mehmet IV's turban at his coronation in 1648. The rest of this room is a succession of increasingly grotesque and jewel-studded exhibits and you might well be tempted to make good your escape.

The fourth room boasts a bejewelled throne and the hand and occipital bone of John the Baptist, but otherwise it's a relative haven of restraint. Ivory and sandalwood objects predominate, refreshingly simple materials whose comparative worth is determined by craftsmanship rather than quantity.

Across the courtyard from the Imperial Treasury, the Pavilion of the Holy Mantle houses the **Rooms of the Relics of the Prophet**, holy relics brought home by Selim the Grim after his conquest of Egypt in 1517. The relics were originally viewed only by the sultan, his family and his immediate entourage on days of special religious significance, but were opened to the public in 1962. They include a footprint, hair and a tooth of the Prophet Mohammed, as well as his mantle and standard, swords of the first four caliphs and a letter from the Prophet to the leader of the Coptic tribe. The most precious of the relics are kept behind glass, attractively arranged and lit.

Next to this, the former **Hall of the Treasury** houses a selection from Topkapı's **collection of paintings and miniatures**, but this is currently closed for restoration, with no clear indication as to when it will reopen. The miniatures date from the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent to that of Ahmet III, the Tulip Age, but mostly come from the reign of Murat III. He commissioned three works, the *Hünername* (*Book of Accomplishments*), the *Shahanshahname* (*Book of the King of Kings*) and the *Surname* (*Book of Festivals*), the first two of which glorified the exploits of the sultans, while the last was a depiction of the glorious parade that followed the circumcision ceremony of the sultan's son (nowadays, Turks make home videos on the same theme).

## The fourth court

The **fourth court** is entered through a passageway running between the Hall of the Treasury and the display of clocks and watches in the Silahdar Treasury. It consists of several gardens, each graced with pavilions, the most attractive of which – and from where you get a totally new perspective of the city from Galata to Fatih – are located around a wide marble terrace beyond the tulip gardens of Ahmet III.

The **Baghdad Köşkü**, the cruciform building to the north of the terrace, is the only pavilion presently open to the public. It was built by Murat IV to celebrate the conquest of Baghdad in 1638. The exterior and cool, dark interior are tiled in blue, turquoise and white, and the shutters and cupboard doors are inlaid with tortoiseshell and mother-of-pearl. If you think this is redolent of unseemly excess, take a look at the attractive pool and marble fountain on the terrace, scene of debauched revels during the reign of İbrahim I, who emerged dangerously insane from 22 years in the Cage (see box, p.62).

The **Circumcision Köşkü**, in the Portico of Columns above the terrace, also dates from the reign of İbrahim the Mad. You'll have to peer through the windows to get any idea of the interior, but outside it's covered in İznik tiles of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. There doesn't seem to be much of a design about these – any number of different patterns are represented – but they include some of the most beautiful panels from the very best İznik period.

▲ Circumcision Köşkü

At the other end of the Portico of Columns is the **Revan Köşkü**, built to commemorate the capture of Erivan in the Caucasus by Mehmet IV.

The **Mecidiye Köşkü** – the last building to be erected at Topkapı – commands the best view of any of the Topkapı pavilions. It's been opened as the expensive *Konyali Café* (see p.190), and on a clear day from its garden terrace you can identify most of the buildings on the Asian shore of the Bosphorus.

## The Harem

The **tour of the Harem** (daily except Tues 10am–4pm; every 30min from the Harem entrance in the second courtyard; 1hr 40min; 15TL) is extremely popular, so arrive early as tickets sell out and queues are massive later in the day. The tour is conducted at breakneck speed, but can be interesting with a little background knowledge and a few pertinent questions.

The word "harem" means "forbidden" in Arabic; in Turkish, it refers to a suite of apartments in a palace or private residence where the head of the household lived with his wives, odalisques (female slaves) and children. The Harem in Topkapı lies between the sultan's private apartments and the quarters of the Chief Black Eunuch. It consisted of over four hundred rooms, centred on the suites of the sultan and his mother, the valide sultan. Around these, in descending order of rank, were the apartments of the wives, favourites, sultan's daughters, princes, housekeepers, maids and odalisques. The Harem was connected to the outside world by means of the **Carriage Gate**, so called because the odalisques would have entered their carriages here when they went on outings. To the left of the Carriage Gate as you enter the Harem is the **Barracks of the Halberdiers of the Long Tresses**, who carried logs and other loads into the Harem. The Halberdiers, who also served as imperial guardsmen, were only employed at certain hours and even then they were blinkered. The Carriage Gate and the Aviary Gate were both guarded by black eunuchs, who were responsible for running the *harem*, but only allowed to

enter in daylight hours. At night, the female housekeepers took charge and reported any unusual occurrences to the Chief Black Eunuch.

The **Court of the Black Eunuchs**, the first area to be visited on the tour, dates mainly from a rebuilding programme begun after the great fire of July 24, 1665. The fire, started by a malicious servant, damaged most of the Harem as well as the Divan. The tiles in the eunuchs' quarters date from the seventeenth century, suggesting that the originals were destroyed in the fire.

The *Altın Yol* or **Golden Road** ran the entire length of the Harem, from the quarters of the Black Eunuchs to the fourth courtyard. It was down this road in 1808 that the last of the great valide sultans, Aimée Dubbucq de Rivery, fled with her son Mahmut to escape the deaf mutes, hired assassins of the Ottoman praetorian guard, the janissaries. The life of the prince was saved by a Georgian odalisque called Cevri Khalfa, who flung a brazier of red-hot coals into the faces of the pursuers. The prince escaped to become Mahmut II, later given the title of "Reformer". Strategically located at the beginning of the Golden Road were the **apartments of the Valide Sultan**, also rebuilt after 1665. They include a particularly lovely domed dining room. A passageway leads from her apartments to those of the women she controlled, the senior women of the court. These were well-designed, compact areas, with an upper gallery in which bedding was stored, windows and a hearth.

Beyond the Valide Sultan's apartments, to the north, are some of the most attractive rooms of the palace. These were the apartments and reception rooms of the *selamlik*, the sultan's own rooms. The largest and grandest of them is the **Hünkar Sofrası**, the Imperial Hall, where the sultan entertained visitors. Another important room in this section is a masterwork of the architect Sinan: the **bedchamber of Murat III**, covered in sixteenth-century İznik tiles and kitted out with a marble fountain and, opposite, a bronze fireplace surrounded by a panel of tiling representing plum blossom.

The northernmost rooms of the Harem are supported by immense piers and vaults, providing capacious basements that were used as dormitories and store-rooms. Below the bedchamber is a large indoor **swimming pool**, with taps for hot and cold water, where Murat is supposed to have thrown gold to women who pleased him. Next to the bedchamber is the light and airy **library of Ahmet I**, with windows overlooking both the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn; beyond this is the **dining room of Ahmet III**, whose walls are covered in wood panelling painted with bowls of fruit and flowers, typical of the extravagant tulip-loving sultan. To the southwest of the bedchamber are two rooms originally thought to be the notorious **Cage** (see box, p.62), though this is no longer believed to be the case – the Cage was actually situated in various rooms on the floor above. Other areas often visited on a tour include the **dormitories** of the favourite women, located up stone stairs on a beautiful terrace overlooking the fourth courtyard, and the **boating pool** of Murat III.

It's usual to depart from the Harem by way of the **Aviary Gate**, or Kuşhane Kapısı. One of the most infamous of all the valide sultans, Mahpeyker Sultan, also known as *Köşem*, "the leader", was assassinated here. She was the effective ruler of the Ottoman Empire during the reigns of her two sons, Murat IV and İbrahim the Mad, and since she was not banished to the old palace after the death of İbrahim (as was customary), she also ruled during the reign of her grandson Mehmet IV. She was eventually murdered on the orders of a jealous rival, the new Valide Sultan Turhan Hatice, by the Chief Black Eunuch. At the age of 80, the toothless old woman was stripped naked and strangled, after allegedly putting up a ferocious struggle.

## The women of the *harem*

The women of the Topkapı Harem were so shrouded in mystery that they became a source of great fascination to the world in general. The most renowned among them was probably Haseki Hürrem, or Roxelana as she was known in the West, wife of Süleyman the Magnificent. Prior to their marriage, it was unusual for a sultan to marry at all, let alone to choose a wife from among his concubines. The marriage, and the subsequent installation of the *harem* women in the palace, established the women of the *harem*, and especially the **valide sultan** (the mother of the reigning sultan), in a position of unprecedented power. This was the beginning of a new age of *harem* intrigue, in which women began to take more control over affairs of state, often referred to as the "Rule of the Harem".

**Roxelana** began this new order in characteristic vein: she persuaded Süleyman to murder both his grand vizier, İbrahim Paşa, and his son, the heir apparent, Mustafa – the latter in order to make way for her own son, Selim the Sot. The favourite of Selim the Sot, **Nur Banu**, made a significant change to the layout of the Harem when she became Valide Sultan in her turn. She moved her suite of apartments from one end of the Golden Road to the other, so that it was located next to that of her son, Murat III. She was now lodged near to the entrance of the Divan and could easily listen in on affairs of state. Nur Banu encouraged her son in debauchery (he fathered a total of 103 children, 54 of whom survived him) and persuaded him to murder his most able minister, the Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmet Paşa.

The number of **odalisques** (female slaves) employed in the *harem* increased steadily with the decline of the Ottoman Empire, and by the reign of Abdülaziz (1861–76) there were 809 in Topkapı. Many were imported from Georgia and Caucasia for their looks, or were prisoners of war, captured in Hungary, Poland or Venice. Upon entering the *harem*, they would become the charges of the *haznedar usta*, who would teach them how to behave towards the sultan and the other palace inhabitants. The conditions in which the majority of these women lived were dangerously unhygienic and many of them died from vermin-carried and waterborne diseases, or from the cold of an İstanbul winter. The women who were chosen to enter the bedchamber of the sultan, however, were promoted to the rank of imperial odalisque, given slaves to serve them, and pleasant accommodation. If they bore him a child, they would be promoted to the rank of favourite or wife, with their own apartments. If the sultan subsequently lost affection for one of these women, he could give her in marriage to one of his courtiers. The following account of life in the Topkapı Harem, given by Hafsa Sultan, a wife of Mustafa II (1695–1703), dispels a couple of popular myths about life there:

**The claims that the sultan throws a handkerchief at the girl he prefers are quite untrue. The sultan asks the Chief Black Eunuch to call whichever of the girls he desires and his other women take her to the baths, perfume her body and dress her gracefully in clothes appropriate to the circumstances. The sultan sends the girl a gift and afterwards goes to the room where she is. There is no truth either in the claim that the girl crawls to the sultan's bed.**

# Gülhane Parkı and around

**Gülhane Parkı** surrounds Topkapı Palace on all sides and was once the extended gardens of the sultans. It is now a public park with a relaxed atmosphere, particularly at weekends when the crowds of families indulge in cheap traditional Turkish fast-foods and listen to free concerts by *arabesk* musicians or pop performers. The park is home to a squalid zoo, with caged dogs and threadbare camels, though other nearby attractions are worthy of attention: the

**Darphane**, or Royal Mint; the city's **Archeology Museum** and adjacent Museum of the Ancient Orient and **Museum of Turkish Ceramics**.

## The Darphane

Located next to Gülhane Parkı, though also entered from the first courtyard of Topkapı Palace, the **Darphane** (Royal Mint; Wed–Sun 9.30am–5.30pm; free; ⓦwww.tarihvakfi.org.tr) was moved to this site in 1715, although there is evidence that coins were struck hereabouts as early as the sixteenth century. Most of the current buildings date from the 1830s and the reign of Mahmut II. The monetary reforms introduced by Abdülmecit between 1839 and 1861 saw the introduction of modern steam-powered machinery to improve the quality of coins produced. The place was largely abandoned in 1967, with the buildings and remaining equipment left undisturbed until the mid-1990s. It's now run by the Turkish Economic and Social History Foundation, which has lovingly restored the complex, opening part as a fascinating museum where smelting equipment, imported European coin presses and assorted artefacts are displayed. There's also an exhibition space, and a theatre where highbrow Turkish plays are performed in summer (see website for details).

## The Archeology Museum complex

The Archeology Museum complex, which also includes the Museum of the Ancient Orient and the Museum of Turkish Ceramics (all daily except Mon 8.30am–7pm; combined entry 10TL), can be entered either through Gülhane Parkı or from the first courtyard of the Topkapı Palace. The **Archeology Museum** (Arkeoloji Müzesi) itself is centred on the excavations at Sidon in 1887 of Hamdi Bey, the Director of Ancient Antiquities. These brought to light a group of sarcophagi, together with other monuments of Phoenician origin but of quite disparate styles – evidence of the variety of influences absorbed into Phoenician culture from neighbouring civilizations. There is much else to see, however, in this wonderful museum – indeed, if you have anything more than a superficial interest in the city's history (and that of Turkey in general), this is an excellent place to start.

The sarcophagi themselves are housed in the two rooms to the left of the entrance on the ground floor. The **Lycian Sarcophagus**, in the room immediately on your left, depicts centaurs, sphinxes and griffons, as well as scenes from Greek mythology. It is in the Lycian style, but the carvings show a Peloponnesian influence in the stocky bodies and broad faces of the human figures. In the same room are the anthropoid sarcophagi from Sidon, which illustrate the fifth-century BC fashion for Egyptian models in Greek sculpture. The **Tabnit Sarcophagus**, the oldest Sidon discovery, is in fact Egyptian in origin. A hieroglyphic inscription on the chest of this alabaster mummy-case states that it belonged to an Egyptian commander named Penephtah and a later inscription suggests that Tabnit, himself the father of a pharaoh, was its second occupant. The **Sidamara Sarcophagus** dates from the third century AD and is the most important remaining example of its type. This second room is full of similar sarcophagi, discovered elsewhere in Anatolia; on many of them a hand-held drill has been used for much of the carving, especially of the foliage, which is roughly executed in comparison with the Sidon sarcophagi.

The **Alexander Sarcophagus** is in the second room to the left. It's covered with scenes of what is presumed to be Alexander the Great hunting and in

battle, but since Alexander himself is known to have been buried in Alexandria this cannot be his sarcophagus. It is ascribed variously by different sources to a ruler of the Seleucid dynasty or to the Phoenician Prince Abdolonyme. It appears that the sarcophagus dates from the end of the fourth century BC. The metal weapons originally held by warriors and huntsmen on the sarcophagi were stolen prior to the excavations of Hamdi Bey, presumably when the burial chambers were looted.

The Ionic architecture of another of the Sidon sarcophagi, the **Sarcophagus of the Mourning Women**, is echoed in the Neoclassical exterior of the museum itself. This one shows eighteen members of the *harem* of King Straton (who died in 360 BC) in various poses of distress and mourning. To drive the point home, a funeral cortege is shown proceeding around the lid of the sarcophagus. As with the Alexander Sarcophagus, traces of the original paintwork can still be seen on the surface of the marble.

Upstairs, "**İstanbul through the Ages**" is devoted to the history of the city from Archaic to Ottoman times, including a section of the chain used to block access to the Golden Horn to enemy ships in the fifteenth century. Also featured are the exciting discoveries made during construction work on the Marmaray Project at Yenikapı, where the well-preserved remains of 24 Byzantine ships have been found (see box, p.31). Another upstairs room houses the smaller finds made by Heinrich Schliemann and his successor, Dörpfeld, at Troy.

The oft-neglected early-Byzantine era is given the treatment it deserves in a beautifully lit basement exhibition, which highlights the successful transition between Classical Roman and Christian Byzantine art – delicate, finely carved columns and capitals form the centrepiece of this stunning display. The children's section on the ground floor is rather less convincing, especially as the labels are in Turkish only, though there's a chance for the little ones to clamber around on a mock "Wooden Horse of Troy", admire diorama's of Neolithic and Bronze Age settlements, and wonder at the paucity of toys available to youngsters in the Roman period.

## The Museum of the Ancient Orient

The **Museum of the Ancient Orient** (Eskı Şark Eserleri Müzesi) – in a fine Neoclassical building built in 1883 just to the north of the main entrance to the complex – contains a small but dazzling collection of Anatolian, Egyptian and Mesopotamian artefacts. The late Hittite basalt lions flanking the entrance look newly hewn, but they actually date from the ninth century BC, giving a taste of the incredible state of preservation of some of the exhibits inside.

One of the most interesting exhibits is the oldest peace treaty known to mankind, the **Treaty of Kadesh** (1280–1269 BC), which was signed when a battle fought on the River Orontes (today's Ası Nehri in Anatolia), between Pharaoh Ramses II and the Hittite king Muvatellish, ended in stalemate. The treaty includes a ceasefire agreement and pledges of a mutual exchange of political refugees, and was originally engraved onto silver tablets. None of these survive, though the treaty was also inscribed in hieroglyphics on the mortuary temple of Ramses II in Thebes, and the copy on display in the museum was uncovered during excavations at the site of the Hittite capital of Hattuşa.

The blue-and-yellow **animal relief** in the corridor beyond Room 1 dates from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar (604–562 BC), the last hero-king of Babylonia, when it would have lined the processional way in Babylon. Other exhibits were taken from Nebuchadnezzar's palace-museum, located at the

Ishtar Gate. Another massive relief, in Room 8, depicts the **Hittite king Urpalla** presenting gifts of grapes and grain to a vegetation god, who is three times his own size and wearing a rather attractive pair of curly-toed boots. This is a plaster copy of a relief found at İvriz Kaya near Konya, dating from the eighth century BC.

Other exhibits include a **Sumerian** love poem and a tablet of Sumerian proverbs dating from the eighteenth century BC. There's also a figure of a duck, with an inscription identifying it as a **standard weight** belonging to a priest called Musallim Marduk: it weighs about 30kg and dates from around 2000 BC, making it the oldest known standard measure.

### The Museum of Turkish Ceramics

The graceful **Çinili Köşk** or Tiled Pavilion – a few metres north of the Museum of the Ancient Orient – was built in 1472 as a kind of grandstand, from which the sultan could watch sporting activities such as wrestling or polo. It now houses the **Museum of Turkish Ceramics**, displaying tiles of equal quality to those in Topkapı Palace and İstanbul's older mosques, along with well-written explanations of the different periods in the history of Turkish ceramics. Look particularly for polychrome tiles of the mid-sixteenth to mid-seventeenth centuries, dating from the longest and most successful period of tile production. Interesting exhibits include a mosque lamp from the Sokollu Mehmet Paşa Camii (see p.75), a ceramic coffee-cooler in which beans were placed after roasting and before grinding, and Murat III's attractive little fountain in the wall of the last room of all, after the İznik collection.

## Yerebatan Sarnıçı

From either the Topkapı Palace or Aya Sofya, it's a quick stroll across the tram tracks to **Yerebatan Sarnıçı** (daily 9am–6.30pm; 10TL), the "Sunken Cistern" – also known as the Basilica Cistern. It's one of several underground cisterns, this one buried under the very core of Sultanahmet and is the first to have been extensively excavated. Although generally crowded, it warrants a prolonged exploration: the entrance is on Cafer Efe Sok, with the exit on Yerebatan Caddesi, above the largest hall of the cistern.

Probably built by the Emperor Constantine in the fourth century, and enlarged by Justinian in the sixth, the cistern was supplied by aqueducts with water from the Belgrade Forest. It, in turn, supplied the Great Palace and later Topkapı Palace. The cistern fell into disuse after the Ottoman conquest and its existence was only brought to public attention in 1545 by the Frenchman **Petrus Gyllius**. He had been led to it by local residents, whose houses were built over the cistern and who had sunk wells into it. They even kept boats on the water from which they could fish its depths – Gyllius' interest was first aroused when he found fresh fish being sold in the streets nearby.

In 1987, fifty thousand tons of mud and water were removed, the walls were covered to make them impermeable, and eight of the columns were sheathed in concrete to fortify the structure. The construction of raised pathways to replace the rowboats used by early tourists may seem a desecration, but they do facilitate a leisurely examination of interesting bits of masonry, as does the careful spotlighting. Despite the piped muzak, the cistern is deeply atmospheric,

with carp swimming lazily through the floodlit waters and water dripping steadily from the vaults above.

The largest covered cistern in the city, Yerebatan held eighty thousand cubic metres of water. The small brick **domes** are supported by 336 columns, many of which have Corinthian capitals. The columns' varied styles probably indicate that they were made from the recycled remnants of earlier structures, The two **Medusa head capitals** supporting a couple of columns in the southwest corner, brought to light when the cistern was drained, are clearly relics from an older building.



# The Hippodrome

The arena of the **Hippodrome**, formerly the cultural focus of the Byzantine Empire, is now the site of a long and narrow municipal park known as **At Meydanı**, or Square of Horses. It is overshadowed by the İbrahim Paşa Sarayı on one side and Blue Mosque on the other, but its historical significance predates that of most other major monuments in İstanbul.

A stadium was first constructed by the Roman Emperor Septimius Severus in 200 AD and later enlarged by Constantine the Great for the performance of court ceremonies and games. Estimated to have held up to 100,000 people, the original orientation and dimensions of the 480-metre-long arena have been more or less preserved by the present-day park, although its amphitheatre was destroyed in the construction of the Blue Mosque. Nonetheless, the Hippodrome continued to be a focus of state ceremony for the Ottoman sultans.

The large open space would be little more than a pleasant respite from the surrounding hubbub if interest were not aroused by the several monuments strewn randomly along its length. At the south end of the park are three survivors of the array of obelisks, columns and statues that originally adorned the *spina*, the raised central axis of the arena, around which chariots raced. Northernmost of these is the **Egyptian Obelisk**, originally 60m tall, though only the upper third survived shipment from Egypt in the fourth century. The obelisk was commissioned to commemorate the campaigns of Thutmos III in

## Crowd trouble in Constantinople

The **Hippodrome factions** originated in ancient Roman trade guilds, which in Byzantine times developed further associations: "the Blues" were generally upper class, politically conservative and orthodox regarding religion; while "the Greens" were from the lower classes and more radical in their political and religious views.

The factions were a focus for serious rivalry in Constantinople, centred on the circus events in the Hippodrome. In 532, the rivalry was forgotten when members of the Blue faction combined forces with the Greens against Emperor Justinian in protest at heavy taxation, and in the resulting **riots** – which derived their name from the battle cry *Nika* (Victory) – much of the city, including the church of Aya Sofya, was destroyed. It was the former courtesan, Empress Theodora, who eventually shamed Justinian into action and, as a result, thirty thousand Greens and a few hundred Blues were trapped and massacred by the forces of General Belisarius in the Hippodrome. Chariot racing was banned for some time after this, and it was a number of years before the Greens recovered to the extent that they could compete in either the sporting or the political arena.

Egypt during the sixteenth century BC, but the scenes on its base commemorate its erection in Constantinople under the direction of Theodosius I. Among the figures depicted are dancing maidens with musicians, Theodosius and his family watching a chariot race (south side) and a group of captives kneeling to pay homage to Theodosius (west side).

The **Serpentine Column** comes from the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, where it was dedicated to the god by the 31 Greek cities that defeated the Persians at Plataea in 479 BC. The column was brought to Constantinople by Constantine the Great. The three intertwining bronze serpents originally had heads, which splayed out in three directions from the column itself. The jaw of one of the serpents was lopped off by Mehmet the Conqueror on his arrival in Constantinople as an act of defiance against such symbols of idolatry and the remaining heads were probably removed in an act of vandalism at the beginning of the eighteenth century – one of them is on display in the Archeology Museum (see p.68).

The third ancient monument on the *spina* is a huge lump of masonry, a 32-metre-high column of little or no decorative or practical worth. The Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus was presumably of the same opinion in the tenth century, since he restored the pillar and sheathed it in gold-plated bronze – an ornamentation that was taken and melted down by the Crusaders during the sacking of Constantinople in 1204. The origins of this so-called **Column of Constantine** are uncertain, but an inscription records that it was already decayed when Constantine restored it.

## Sultanahmet Camii: the Blue Mosque

On the southeastern side of the Hippodrome is the **Sultanahmet Camii**, or **Blue Mosque** (daily from 9am until one hour before dusk prayer call; donations expected). Its instantly recognizable six minarets, imposing bulk and prominent position on the İstanbul skyline, combine to make it one of the most famous and visited monuments in the city. Despite this, many architectural historians compare it unfavourably to the earlier works of the master architect, Mimar Sinan (see box, p.95). From the outside, the building is undeniably impressive, particularly on the all-important approach from the Topkapı Palace along Babıhümayün and Kabasakal caddesis. Above the level of the courtyard, the mosque is a mass of shallow domes and domed turrets, hardly broken by a single straight line.

Before construction began, in 1609, objections were raised to the plan of a six-minareted mosque. It was said to be unholy to rival the six minarets of the mosque at Mecca, and perhaps more pertinently it would be a great drain on state revenues. The true cause of the objections, however, probably had more to do with the need to destroy several palaces belonging to imperial ministers to make way for construction.

There are two **entrances** to the mosque: at the side, facing Aya Sofya, where you will invariably encounter large crowds, and – despite signs asking otherwise – through the courtyard, as long as you are suitably covered (limbs for men and women, heads for women) and do not intrude on worshippers. Best approached from the attractive and graceful west portal, the **courtyard** is surrounded by a portico of thirty small domes and has the same dimensions as the mosque itself.

Inside, four "**elephant foot**" **pillars** (so called because of their size) of 5m in diameter impose their disproportionate dimensions on the interior, appearing

squashed against the outer walls and obscuring parts of the building from every angle. But it's the predominantly blue colour of the internal decoration that is the biggest draw, from which the name "Blue Mosque" is derived. The **tiles** – over twenty thousand of them – constituted such a tall order that the İznik kilns were practically exhausted. Still in evidence are the clear bright colours of the best period of İznik ware, including flower and tree panels as well as more abstract designs.

At the northeast corner of the complex is the richly decorated and elegant **royal pavilion**, approached by a ramp and giving access to the sultan's loge inside the mosque – the ramp meant that the sultan could ride his horse right up to the door of his chambers. The royal pavilion now houses a **Museum of Carpets** (Halı Müzesi; Tues–Sat 9am–4pm; 2TL), which traces the history of Turkish carpets through the ages and includes some ancient, priceless pieces.

Between May 1 and September 30, there's a free **sound and light show** conducted from the small seating area in the park between the mosque and Aya Sofya. Images are projected onto the surrounding buildings to a musical and spoken accompaniment – performed in English, French, Turkish and German on alternate evenings from 7.30pm onwards. Unfortunately, the event attracts a large number of hustlers.

### The tomb of Sultan Ahmet

Outside the precinct wall to the northwest of the mosque is the *türbe* or **tomb of Sultan Ahmet** (Tues–Sat 9am–4pm; free), decorated, like the mosque, with seventeenth-century İznik tiles. Buried here along with the sultan are his wife and three of his sons, two of whom (Osman II and Murat IV) ruled in their turn. This successive rule of brothers was only possible because Sultan Ahmet had introduced the institution of the Cage (see box, p.62), thus relieving himself and his sons of the burden of fratricide upon accession to the throne. Unfortunately, Osman was completely mad and unfit to rule by the time he left the Cage to take up the reins of office. Murat IV only escaped this fate by succeeding to the throne at the age of 10, before the conditions in the Cage had affected him.

## The Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art

The **İbrahim Paşa Sarayı** (Palace of İbrahim Paşa), on the western side of the Hippodrome, is now the **Türk ve Bslam Eserleri Müzesi** (Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art: daily except Mon 9am–4.30pm; 10TL), an attractive, well-planned museum, containing one of the best-exhibited collections of Islamic artefacts in the world. The sixteenth-century setting of cool, darkened rooms around a central garden courtyard obviates the need for expensive technology to keep the sun off the remarkable exhibits, which highlight the wealth and complexity of Islamic art and culture. The museum also boasts an excellent courtyard **café**.

The palace itself is one of the few private Ottoman residences to have survived – at least in part – the fires that periodically destroyed large areas of the city. Much of the building has, however, disappeared. What remains was rebuilt in stone – to the original plan – in 1843. Originally completed in 1524 as a wedding present for İbrahim Paşa, Süleyman the Magnificent's newly appointed grand vizier, the palace is a fitting memorial to one of the most able statesmen

of his time, whose abilities were matched only by his accumulation of wealth and power. His status can be judged from the proportions of the palace's rooms and by its prominent position next to the Hippodrome: later sultans were to use its balconies to watch the festivities below. İbrahim controlled the affairs of war and state of the Ottoman Empire for thirteen years and fell from grace partly as a result of the schemings of Süleyman's wife, Roxelana. Even so, it doesn't seem unreasonable that Süleyman should distrust a servant who could say to a foreign ambassador: "If I command that something should be done, and he [the sultan] has commanded to the contrary, my wishes and not his are obeyed." The strangled body of İbrahim Paşa was found in a room of the Topkapı Palace. Süleyman the Magnificent ordered it to be buried in an unmarked grave and İbrahim Paşa's possessions, not least the palace, reverted to the crown.

## The museum exhibits

The main concentration of permanent exhibits deals with Selçuk, Mamluk and Ottoman Turkish art, though there are also several important Timurid and Persian works on display. Temporary exhibitions run in the downstairs hall. Labels are in English, but are rather brief, so be prepared to do some follow-up reading.

The **Selçuk Empire**, centred in Konya, preceded that of the Ottomans in Anatolia, and it is interesting to trace influences from one to the other. Ceramic techniques, for example, were obviously well developed by the Selçuks, judging from the wall tiles on display in the museum, and the woodcarvings from Konya also suggest a high level of craftsmanship and artistry, which may have influenced later Ottoman work.

Other impressive exhibits include sixteenth-century Persian miniatures, which like many Ottoman works defy the Islamic stricture against depicting human or animal forms. Pictures in lacquer and leather-bound Persian manuscripts feature a tiger ripping into an antelope and another of a dancing girl dated 1570. The tiny Sancak Korans were meant for hanging on the standard of the Ottoman imperial army in a jihad (holy war), so that the word of God would precede the troops into battle.

The **Great Hall** of the palace is occasionally devoted to special exhibitions about aspects of Islamic art, but more usually it houses a collection of **Turkish carpets** that is among the finest in the world. These range from tattered remains dating from the thirteenth century to carpets that once adorned İstanbul's palaces, some weighing thousands of kilograms. On the basement floor, there's an exhibition of the **folk art** of the *Yörük* tribes of Anatolia, which includes examples of a *kara çadır* (literally "black tent", a domicile woven from goat hair that can still be seen in central and eastern Anatolia) and a *topakev* (a tent constructed around a folding frame, used by nomads in Anatolia and Mongolia for over a thousand years). There is also a fascinating display of what life was like in a late-Ottoman wooden house in Bursa.

# The Hamam of Roxelana

The double-domed building between the Blue Mosque and Aya Sofya is the **Hamam of Roxelana** (Haseki Hürrem Sultan Hamami; daily except Tues 9.30am–5pm; free). Built by Mimar Sinan in 1556, it replaced the Byzantine baths of Zeuxippus on the same site and was named in honour of Süleyman's

wife, Roxelana. The 75-metre-long *hamam* served the worshippers at the mosque of Aya Sofya, and has been restored with stained-glass windows and varnished wooden doors with the original marble fountains in the changing rooms. The building now serves as a showroom for traditional hand-woven carpets and kilims, which are for sale (at a price).

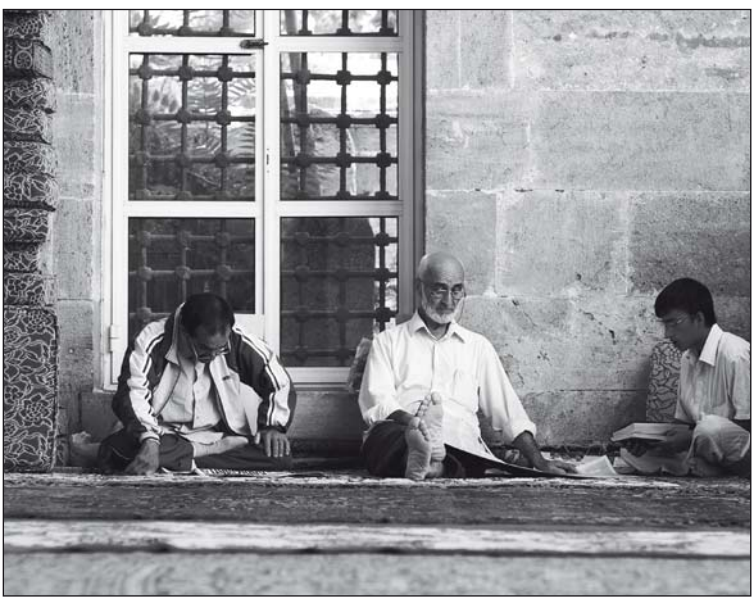


## Sokollu Mehmet Paşa Camii

A pleasant couple of minutes' walk from the southwest corner of the Hippodrome leads down the steep Mehmet Paşa Yokuşu to **Sokollu Mehmet Paşa Camii** (open at prayer times only, but the *imam* may be around to unlock it during the day). This, one of Mimar Sinan's later buildings (1571), shamefully appears to have been omitted almost entirely from tourist itineraries. Sokollu Mehmet Paşa, who commissioned the mosque, was the last grand vizier of Süleyman the Magnificent and it was his military expertise that later saved the Ottoman Empire from the worst effects of the dissolute rule of Selim the Sot. He was eventually assassinated as a result of the intrigues of Nur Banu, the mother of Murat III, who was jealous of his power.

The large mosque **courtyard** is surrounded on three sides by the rooms of the *medrese*, now occupied by a boys' Koran school (the boys inhabit the dervish lodge at the back of the mosque and can be seen seated in the porch studying the Koran during term time). At the centre of the courtyard is a handsome fountain with a pretty up-curved parapet to its dome.

The **interior** of the mosque is distinguished by the height of its dome and the impressive display of İznik tiles on its east wall. These are from the best



▲ Men reading at the Sokollu Mehmet Paşa Camii

period of Turkish ceramics: the white is pure, the green vivid and the red intense. Calligraphic inscriptions are set against a jungle of enormous carnations and tulips, and the designs and colours are echoed all around the mosque and in the conical cap of the *mimber*, the tiling of which is unique in İstanbul. While the stained-glass windows are copies, some of the original, extremely delicate **paintwork** can be seen in the northwest corner below the gallery and over the entrance. Embedded in the wall over the entrance and above the *mihrab* are pieces of the Kaaba from Mecca.

## Küçük Ayasofya Camii

Located some 500m below the Blue Mosque, downhill on Küçük Ayasofya Caddesi is the often-overlooked but recently restored **Küçük Ayasofya Camii**, the "small mosque of Aya Sofya". Entry (daily 7am–dusk) is, as to all mosques, free, but donations are expected. Like Aya Sofya itself, it was built as a church between 527 and 536 to service the palace of Hormisdas, and is thought to precede its larger namesake. It was originally named after two Roman soldiers, **Sergius** and **Bacchus**, who were martyred for their faith and later became the patron saints of Christians in the Roman army, then was renamed because of its resemblance to Aya Sofya. The church was converted into a mosque comparatively early in the sixteenth century during the reign of Beyazit II.

Like most Byzantine churches of this era, its **exterior** is unprepossessing brick, and only inside can the satisfying proportions be properly appreciated. It is basically an octagon with semicircular niches at its diagonals, inscribed in a rectangle, but both these shapes are extremely irregular. This has been variously ascribed to a pragmatic solution to an awkward space at planning stage, or to shoddy workmanship. The original marble facing and gold leaf have vanished, but a frieze honouring Justinian, Theodora and St Sergius runs around the architrave under the gallery. Opposite the main entrance to the mosque is a *medrese*, the courtyard of which now serves as a shady tea garden.

## The sea walls and around

At Küçük Ayasofya Camii, you're almost down at the Sea of Marmara and close to the best-preserved section of the **sea walls**, built in 439 by Cyrus, prefect of the East. They originally stretched from Saray Burnu to the city walls of Constantine the Great, and were later extended by Theodosius to meet his land walls, with thirteen gates piercing the eight-kilometre course. Theophilus, the last Iconoclast emperor, rebuilt the walls in the ninth century to hold off a possible Arab invasion.

Nowadays, the best way to see the walls is by train, since the tracks run along their length and out of the city; indeed, parts were destroyed when the rail lines were built. The best-preserved remains are a stretch of a couple of kilometres between Ahır Kapı, near Cankurtaran train station, and Kumkapı, with a walkway along Kennedy Caddesi.

## The Palace of Bucoleon and the Great Palace

About halfway between Küçük Ayasofya Camii and Cankurtaran train station the facade of the Palace of Bucoleon, a seaside annexe to the **Great Palace of the Byzantine emperors**, is one of the most melancholy and moving survivors of Constantinople. The Great Palace was an immense structure, covering around five square kilometres from Sultanahmet to the sea walls. At its height, it consisted of several separate palaces, including the Palace of Bucoleon and the Magnaura Palace – substantial sections of which also survive. In 1204, the palace was taken over by the Crusaders and a description by one illuminates the splendours they discovered:

**Within the palace there were fully 500 halls all connected with one another and all made with gold mosaic. And in it were fully 30 chapels, great and small, and there was one of them that was called the Holy Chapel, which was so rich and noble that there was not a hinge or a band nor any other small part that was not all of silver, and there was no column that was not of jasper or porphyry or some other precious stone.**

By the time the Latins left in 1261, the palace was virtually destroyed, and funds were never found to repair it.

Draped in beautiful red vine and set back from the road with a little park in front, it's easy to miss what's left of the **Palace of Bucoleon**, especially if you pass at speed along Kennedy Caddesi. Three enormous marble-framed windows set high in the wall offer glimpses of the remains of a vaulted room behind. Below the windows, marble corbels give evidence of a balcony that would have projected over a marble quay (the waters of the Marmara once reached almost as far as the palace walls). For the rest of the Great Palace, you'll need a lively imagination: you could wander 200m along Kutlugün Sokak to visit the **Başdoğan carpet centre**, where shop owners allow free access to the impressive complex of vaulted basements, or travel further down towards the coast where fragments of wall and ancient palace, on streets or tucked away in back-lots, are all that survive. Further sections of the palace exist under land belonging to the *Four Seasons Hotel* (see p.178). Excavated in 1998, these are said to contain a vaulted chapel with some frescoes still intact. At the time of writing this large area of land was undergoing excavation/renovation and will open as an "archeological park" when the work is complete – though much legal wrangling could well delay completion.

# The Mosaic Museum

The other substantial reminders of the Great Palace are the mosaics displayed in the **Büyüksaray Mozaik Müzesi** (Mosaic Museum: daily except Mon 9am–4.30pm; 8TL), 500m inland from the Palace of Bucoleon, on Torun Sokağı. To reach it requires running the gauntlet of salespeople in the **Arasta Çarşısı** – a renovated street-bazaar selling tourist gifts, whose seventeenth-century shops were originally built to pay for the upkeep of the nearby Blue Mosque.

Many of the mosaics in the museum are presented *in situ*, so that some idea of their original scale and purpose can be imagined. The building has been constructed so that some of the mosaics are viewed from a catwalk above, but

can also be examined more closely by descending to their level. Smaller surviving sections of mosaic, each square metre of which contain some forty thousand tessarae, have been wall-mounted. All these remains were once part of a large mosaic decorating the palace's peristyle (an open courtyard surrounded by a portico). The scenes depicted by the mosaic artists, probably dating from Justinian's rebuilding programme of the sixth century, are extraordinarily vivid and give a valuable insight into everyday Byzantine life. On one, a man with a staff leads a camel surmounted by two riders; on another, a herdsman pulls an unwilling goat. In another fine scene, four boys drive hoops along with sticks – two of them have their tunics edged in blue, the other two in green, touching proof that rivalry between "the Greens" and "the Blues" in the Hippodrome did not preclude friendship. Despite the Christian nature of the Byzantine world, scenes from classical mythology also abound – check out the hero Bellerophon battling the fire-breathing monster known as the Chimera.

## Cağaloğlu Hamamı

**Cağaloğlu** was traditionally the centre of Turkey's newspaper industry, but with the exception of the old and well-respected *Cumhuriyet*, the press has long since moved into high-tech media centres on the outskirts of town. The major attraction here today is the **Cağaloğlu Hamamı** on Kazım İsmail Gürkan Caddesi (daily: men 8am–10pm, women 8am–8.30pm; 24TL for self-service bath, 54–72TL for assisted baths and massages; Ⓦ www.cagalogluhamami.com.tr); the women's entrance to the *hamam* is around the corner on Cağaloğlu Hamam Sokak. The most popular baths this side of town, they are famous for their beautiful *hararet*s or steam rooms – open cruciform chambers with windowed domes supported on a circle of columns. The baths were built in 1741 by Mahmut I to pay for the upkeep of his library in Aya Sofya, and the arches, basins and taps of the hot room, as well as the entries to the private cubicles, are all magnificently Baroque. Florence Nightingale is said to have bathed here and the *hamam* has appeared in several movies, including *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*.

## Divan Yolu

The main approach from Sultanahmet to Beyazit is **Divan Yolu**, a major thoroughfare that gained its name because it was the principal approach to the Divan from the Topkapı Gate. Hordes of people would pour along it three times a week to make their petitions to the court. In Roman and Byzantine times, this street was the Mese or "Middleway" and ran from a triumphal arch known as the Milion (near the Yerebatan Sarnıçı) westwards through the city and eventually – linking in with the great Roman road system – as far as the Adriatic. It remains a crucial part of the city's transport network, though it is now given over to the trams that rattle their way from Zeytinburnu, through old İstanbul and over the Golden Horn to Kabataş.

Some 300m west of the surviving fragment of the Milion, on a narrow street running south from Divan Yolu, is the **Binbirdirek Sarnıçı** (Cistern of a

## The "world famous" Pudding Shop

Back in the heady days of the 1960s, when Flower Power ruled and kaftans, Afghan coats and Jesus sandals were seen as serious fashion statements, every right-thinking young person wanted to head east – to "India, maan". In those days, well before affordable long-haul flights, that meant an arduous overland trip from Europe – via İstanbul. In folk memory at least, the so called **Hippy Trail** was one long procession of VW camper vans daubed with peace logos and spaced-out hitchhikers wondering whether they were in Brussels or Belgrade. **The Pudding Shop** (or, to give it its proper name, the *Lale* (*Tulip*) *Restaurant*; see p.190) became the gathering point for those travellers setting out on the most difficult leg of the trail – across Anatolian Turkey and into Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan and to the fabled land of India.

The Çolpan brothers, Idris and Namik, having established their restaurant on Sultanahmet's busy Divan Yolu in 1957, were surprised to find their eatery becoming *the* place where hippies met to swap stories and arrange onward transport. With typical İstanbullu business savvy, they put up a bulletin board where travellers could post a note offering a ride to Kathmandu, a message for a long-awaited travelling companion, or helpful advice for novice travellers. Business boomed and the sales of rice pudding (one of the desserts on offer that gave the *Lale* its "unofficial" moniker) soared.

The Hippy Trail may have gone the same way as the Afghan coat but the Pudding Shop continues to thrive. It is still run by the Çolpan brothers and, many redecorations later, the hippies' bulletin board – the original travellers "blog" – remains as a reminder of a bygone era. The place was also immortalized in Alan Parker's 1978 film, **Midnight Express**. In the film (based on a true story), a young American, Billy Hayes, is caught trying to smuggle a large quantity of hashish out of the country. He claims to have bought the drugs at the Pudding Shop. When the police take him there to see if they can apprehend the dealer, Hayes makes an unsuccessful escape bid. Unsuprisingly, this association is not promoted by the restaurant, as *Midnight Express*, with its depictions of brutality and torture in the city's Bayrampaşa prison, is seen by the vast majority of Turks – including the owners of the Pudding Shop – as an affront to their nation.

Thousand and One Columns). At 64m by 56m, this is the second largest cistern in the city and is accessible via an entrance in its impressively thick retaining wall on İmran Ökten Sokak. The structure, now bone dry and half its former height due to a false floor, currently serves as a function room for weddings, circumcision ceremonies and the like, so gaining access is a matter of chance. Originally, the hall was over 12m high, as can be seen from the small area of four columns excavated to the original floor. The cistern is thought to have been built under the palace of Philoxenus, one of the Roman senators who accompanied Emperor Constantine to the city. It dried up completely around the fifteenth century and was later used as a spinning mill until the early twentieth century.

2

# Sirkeci, Eminönü and Tahtakale

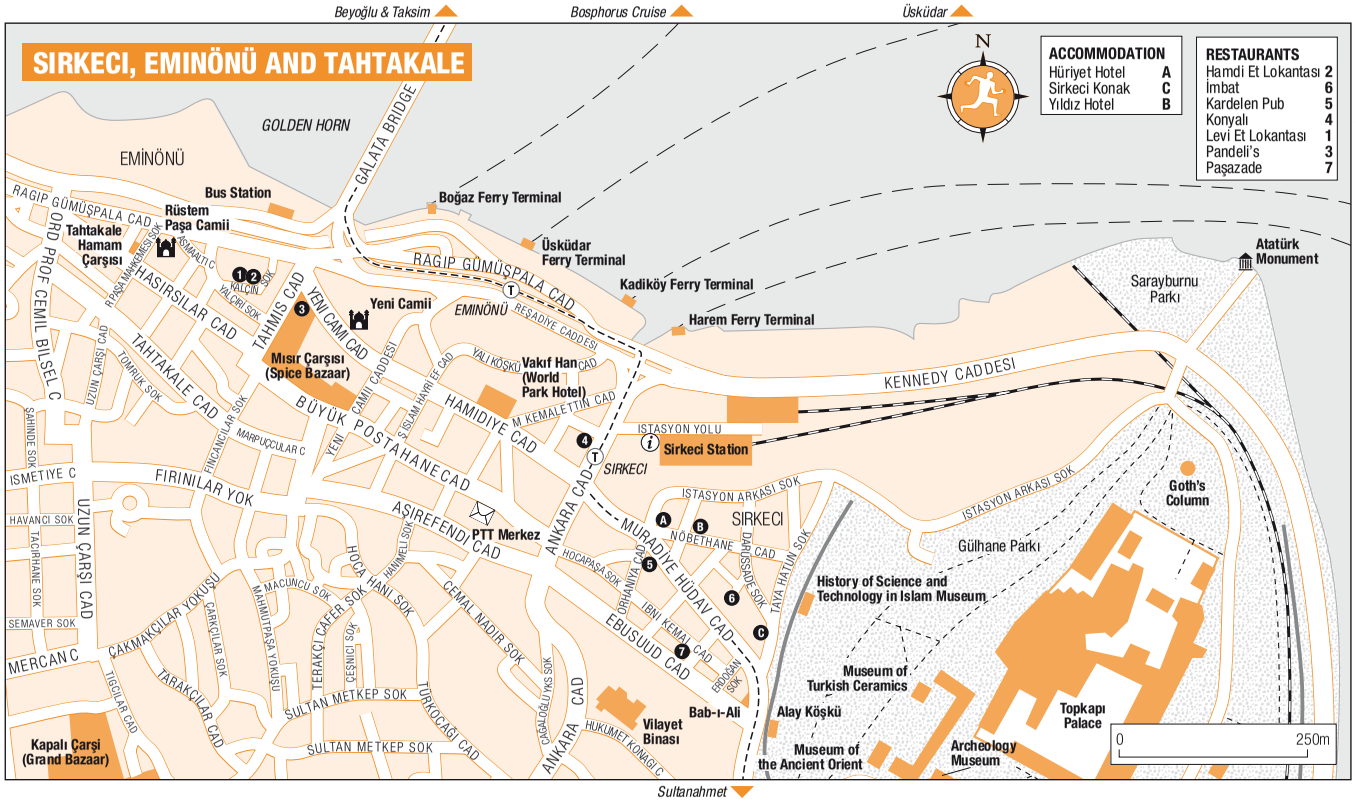
As you head north from the tourist fleshpots of Sultanahmet towards the waters of the Golden Horn, you quickly enter a different world – that of commerce. Offices still fill the upper floors of the fine buildings lining the bustling streets of **Sirkeci** and **Eminönü**, whilst shopkeepers selling everything from trainers to electrical appliances vie for business at street level. İstanbullus begin to outnumber visitors and many of them depend on each other (rather than tourists) for their livelihoods, particularly in the bazaar quarter of **Tahtakale**. This makes the area seem refreshingly "real" after Sultanahmet – yet there are enough worthwhile attractions to keep you occupied for a whole day, notably the famous **Sirkeci station**, eastern terminus of the *Orient Express*; the charming Ottoman-era **Spice Bazaar**, the landmark **Yeni Camii**, a mosque as popular with hawkers and pigeons as it is with worshippers; and the **Rustem Paşa Camii**, a gem of a mosque famed for its glorious İznik tiles.

Once the maritime gateway to the city, the ships now docking at Eminönü's busy quay are ferries carrying commuters and visitors across to Asia, up the Bosphorus or along the Golden Horn. The tram from Sultanahmet stops in both Sirkeci and Eminönü before snaking its way across the Galata Bridge to Beyoğlu, while a useful suburban train line runs from Sirkeci station out along the shores of the Sea of Marmara to the city's land walls. There's also a major bus terminal on the waterfront, just west of the Galata Bridge

The pedestrianization of much of the area began in June 2008 and will help make exploring the streets round about a great deal more pleasant.

## Sirkeci

**Sirkeci**, a bustling district of fast-food restaurants, phone and camera shops, and backstreet hotels, is dominated by the once-opulent Sirkeci station. A transport and commercial area, it has, unsurprisingly, a largely transient population – its estimated permanent population of thirty thousand swells to some two million souls thronging the daytime streets and/or working in the multitude of local businesses. How much of the area's character will be lost


SIRKECI, EMINÖNÜ AND TAHTAKALE
Beyoğlu & Taksim
Bosphorus Cruise
Üsküdar
Haydarpaşa & Kadiköy
Harem
Sultanahmet
N
ACCOMMODATION
Hüriyet Hotel A
Sirkeci Konak C
Yıldız Hotel B
RESTAURANTS
Hamdi Et Lokantası 2
İmbat 6
Kardelen Pub 5
Konyalı 4
Levi Et Lokantası 1
Pandeli's 3
Paşazade 7
GOLDEN HORN
EMİNÖNÜ
GALATA BRIDGE
Bus Station
Rüstem Paşa Camii
Tahtakale Hamam Çarşısı
Boğaz Ferry Terminal
Üsküdar Ferry Terminal
Kadiköy Ferry Terminal
Harem Ferry Terminal
Atatürk Monument
Sarayburnu Parkı
RAGIP GÜMÜŞPALA CAD
PROF CEMIL BILSEL C
HASIRSILAR CAD
TAHTAKALE CAD
TAHMIS CAD
YENI CAMI CAD
Yeni Camii
Mısır Çarşısı (Spice Bazaar)
EMİNÖNÜ
BEŞADIYE CADDESI
YALI KÖSKÜ
Vakıf Han (World Park Hotel)
KENNEDY CADDESI
HAMIDIYE CAD
M KEMALETTIN CAD
BÜYÜK POSTAHANE CAD
ISTASYON YOLU
Sirkeci Station
SIRKECI
ISTASYON ARKASI SOK
ISMETIYE C
FIRINILAR YOK
UZUN ÇARSI CAD
ASIREFENDI CAD
PTT Merkez
ANKARA CAD
MURADIYE HUDAVI CAD
SIRKECI
NOBETHANE
DARUSSADE SOK
TAYA HATUN SOK
Goth's Column
Gülhane Parkı
History of Science and Technology in Islam Museum
Museum of Turkish Ceramics
Alay Köşkü
Topkapı Palace
Archeology Museum
Museum of the Ancient Orient
MERCAN C
ÇAKMAKÇILAR YOKUSU
TERAKÇILAR CAD
SULTAN METKEP SOK
TÜRKOCAĞI CAD
EBUSUUD CAD
Bab-ı-Ali
Vilayet Binası
HÜKÜMET KONAĞI C
Kapalı Çarşi (Grand Bazaar)
0
250m

with the completion of the Marmaray Project (see box, p.31), and the inevitable "gentrification" of potentially prime tourist real estate adjacent to Sultanahmet, remains to be seen.

Following the tram track downhill from Sultanahmet, the first thing of note is the **Bab-ı-Ali** or Sublime Porte, just north of the Gülhane tram stop. This ornamental gateway marked the entrance to the administrative centre of the Ottoman Empire from the mid-seventeenth century onwards, though the gate was only erected in 1843. Here the vizir presided over the day-to-day running of the empire. The portal's sinuously curved lintel lends a certain grace to its Ottoman Baroque style, though today it functions, rather more prosaically, as the back entrance to the **Vilayet Binası**, the headquarters building for the province of İstanbul.

The high stone walls of Gülhane Parkı, part of the outer defences of the Topkapı Palace built by Fatih Mehmet II around 1465, rise right above the pavement on the east side of the tram track. Set into these is the **Alay Köşkü**, a raised gazebo from where the sultans could watch official parades pass by, or, as was the wont of the more suspicious rulers, keep an eye on who was passing in and out of the Bab-ı-Ali across the road – one, Murat IV, kept his subjects on their toes by firing crossbow bolts at them from up here. In the old imperial stables in Gülhane Parkı, the **History of Science and Technology in Islam Museum** houses a series of replicas of inventions by Islamic scientists between the eighth and sixteenth centuries. At the time of writing, the museum had just opened and neither opening hours nor admission fee had been set. Purists may deplore the absence of genuine artefacts but the models are extremely well crafted, beautifully displayed and certainly belie the West's often patronizing attitude towards science and technology in the Muslim world.

On the western side of the tram track, look out for a couple of arguably the most unusual and beautiful **little shops** in the world – late-Ottoman octagonal, domed marble kiosks selling everything from cold drinks and chocolate to cigarettes and tissues. Originally, these were *sebil* or covered fountains, built by wealthy patrons who hoped that every cupful of water drunk from his fountain by a thirsty passer-by would take him a step closer to heaven. This upper area of Sirkeci, before the road swings to the northwest is rapidly being transformed into a visitor-friendly zone with a number of decent hotels and restaurants. As the road levels out approaching the station things become more workaday, with shops and quick-bite restaurants serving the needs of the district's commuters.

Opened with great fanfare in 1888, right in the heart of imperial İstanbul, grandiose **Sirkeci station** was once the eastern terminus for the famed *Orient Express*, the train that linked Paris and Vienna with İstanbul – and became a metaphor for style, opulence and, of course, intrigue. Designed by Prussian architect August Jachmund, it was an Oriental fantasy, with a Parisian-style dome, minaret-like turrets and Moghul-influenced windows. The station retains a faded grandeur despite the passage of time – make sure you wander around to the building's north facade, facing the Golden Horn, as this was the original entrance – but the glamour days are long gone. Sirkeci now serves İstanbul commuters rather than the socialites and spies of its heyday, and may well be superseded altogether as plans to restructure the city's transport system (see p.29) appear not to include this venerable old station. Opposite the station's current, western, entrance is Sirkeci tram stop, backed by a number of very fine nineteenth-century commercial buildings.

# Eminönü

**Eminönü** fronts the glittering (on a sunny day) waters of the Golden Horn, the curving inlet that divides the European shore. The historic Mısır Çarşısı or **Spice Bazaar**, with its great shopping opportunities, is the district's major draw, though the **Yeni Camii** or "New Mosque" runs it a close second.

Given its role as one of the city's major transport hubs, it's no surprise that the area bustles with activity from dawn till dusk (and beyond), with vendors selling cheap and tasty fried-fish sandwiches from small boats moored to the dockside, hawkers whizzing remote-controlled cars through the legs of potential punters, and *simit* sellers kept busy by a steady stream of customers. If you can find a peaceful spot amongst the mayhem, the views north across the Golden Horn and the **Galata Bridge** to Galata and west to the equally busy waters of the Bosphorus are fabulous. Underground, the subways are home to hordes of shops selling fake designer clothing, cheap trainers, mobile phones and a lot more besides. Despite the hassle, however, they're a far better choice than trying to negotiate the road and tram track separating the quayside from the rest of the area – getting across these in one piece is not an easy task.

## Behind the waterfront

If you have any interest in turn-of-the-century buildings, it's well worth exploring the busy streets behind the waterfront. The **PTT Merkez** (Central Post Office) on Büyük Postahane Caddesi was designed by Vedat Tak and has been used as a post office since 1909. Tak, the first Turkish architect to study abroad, was a pioneer of the First National Architectural Movement, which, following the formation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, aimed to blend contemporary European architecture with traditional Turkish styles and create something fitting for this new, progressive country. The structure is certainly monumental, with a sweeping facade split by two towers that were originally planned to hold clocks – one Ottoman in style, the other European. The interior is cavernous, its rather gloomy atmosphere enlivened by neo-Ottoman floral murals, aged and nicotine-stained wooden counters and original 1920s light fittings.

Just across from the PTT Merkez, on a corner plot where Muhzirbaşı Sokak joins Büyük Postahane Caddesi, is a wonderfully ornate Art Nouveau apartment building. Stylized rosebud relief plasterwork and whiplash wrought-iron work make this one of the most obvious Art Nouveau buildings in the city – if not the most artistic (that accolade goes to the Botter House in Beyoğlu; see p.127). Unfortunately, it's looking rather neglected and the lower storeys are marred by billboards. Nearby, the *World Park Hotel* on Hamidiye Caddesi is even more monumental than the PTT Merkez. Originally, this was the **Vakıf Han**, built in 1912, a colossal office block that paid testament to the wealth of the area and its commercial importance in the early twentieth century. Another example of the First National Architectural Movement, its reinforced steel frame and cut stone facade show a European influence; the tiled panels and domes that of an Ottoman past.

## The Galata Bridge

The vast majority of visitors to İstanbul cross the **Galata Bridge** at least once during their stay. It won't win any architectural prizes, but the link between the two sides of European İstanbul, separated by the waters of the Golden Horn, is

## The Golden Horn

The derivation of the name **Golden Horn** is obscure (the Turkish name, *Halic*, simply means "estuary"). One fanciful suggestion is that it was coined during the fifteenth-century siege of the city, when all the gold and precious objects the Byzantine citizens could collect were thrown into the inlet to save them being taken by the advancing Ottoman forces. Visitors in Ottoman times wrote about the area's perfumed waters, though by the 1950s the author Yaşar Kemal described it in *The Sea-Crossed Fisherman* as "a filthy sewer filled with empty cans and rubbish and horse carcasses, dead dogs and gulls and wild boars and thousands of cats, stinking … A viscid, turbid mass, opaque, teeming with maggots." Recent years have seen a huge improvement, though swimming is still not recommended.

Despite the pollution, the Golden Horn is one of the finest **natural harbours** in the world and its fortunes have been closely linked with those of the city. On two separate occasions, capture of the Horn proved to be the turning point of crucial military campaigns. In 1203–04, Crusaders took the Horn and proceeded to besiege Constantinople for ten months, until they breached the walls separating the inlet from the city. The second occasion was a spectacular *tour de force* by Mehmet the Conqueror, who was prevented from entering the Horn by a chain fastened across it and so carried his ships overland at night and launched them into the inlet from its northern shore. Mehmet then constructed a pontoon across the top of the Horn, over which he transported his army and cannons in preparation for the siege of the land walls, which were finally breached in 1453.

For the Ottoman Empire, the Horn was a vital harbour, supplying the Genoese, Venetian and Jewish trading colonies on its northern shore. It was also a site for **ship construction**, and ships are still repaired here, though most shipbuilding yards have moved east of İstanbul to Tuzla.

undeniably a city landmark. The trams that rumble back and forth between Zeytinburnu and Kabataş are packed to the brim, and the noise – from cars, trucks and buses, and hawkers flogging their wares on the upper and lower decks – is deafening, but the views from here, down the Golden Horn and into the Bosphorus itself, are superb, particularly at sunset. The upper deck is always lined with anglers, their numbers swelling to ludicrous proportions on a Sunday, and you have to pick your way carefully through bait buckets and strands of tangled line, sinkers and hooks.

The current bridge, built in 1994, is its fifth incarnation – the first was constructed in 1845 during the reign of Sultan Abdülmecid. The bridge has always had a symbolic significance, linking as it did the old, imperial and Islamic part of the city with the largely Christian, "European" area of Beyoğlu – home to foreign traders, diplomats and the like. To some extent, this gulf persists, with the Old City's curious mix of foreign visitors and conservative Muslim inhabitants contrasting with the vibrant nightlife and upwardly mobile, progressive residents of Beyoğlu.

## Yeni Camii

The **Yeni Camii**, or "New Mosque", is a familiar city landmark, sited across the busy road from Eminönü's ferry terminal. An imposing building, whose pigeon-covered steps are popular with hawkers and pickpockets, it was the last of İstanbul's imperial mosques to be built, and its history gives an interesting perspective on *harem* power-struggles. It was erected for the Valide Sultan Safiye ("the light one", a beautiful Venetian woman who some said was a

Venetian spy), mother of Mehmet III and one of the most powerful of the valide sultans, who effectively ruled the whole empire through the weakness of her son. This was the only imperial mosque to be built during the reign of Mehmet III and the site chosen by Safiye was regarded as wholly inappropriate. It occupied a slum neighbourhood inhabited by a sect of Jews called the Karaites, who were relocated across the Horn to Hasköy. A synagogue and church had to be demolished to make room for it. The site was also dangerously close to the water's edge, and the building programme was constantly plagued by seepage from the Horn.

An even greater hindrance to its construction was court politics. The original architect was executed for heresy and the work was interrupted again by the death of Mehmet III and the banishment of his mother to the Old Palace. Construction had reached as far as the lower casements when it was halted, and the Karaites returned to camp out in the rubble. It was another sixty years before the Valide Sultan Turhan Hatice, mother of Sultan Mehmet IV, completed the building.

The mosque was designed by a pupil of Sinan (see p.95) and is generally considered to lack the grace of the great master's works. It is, nonetheless, an attractive mosque, built on a cruciform plan, with a large central dome surmounting four semi-domes. Entry is from a fine courtyard surrounded by porticoes, with an attractive octagonal *şadırvan* in the centre. As in most Ottoman mosques, the portico, running at right angles across the entry wall, has a raised platform used as an overspill prayer area when the mosque is full, or by late arrivals. Two attractive *mihrabs* puncture the wall either side of the main portal, embellished, like the doorway itself, with a finely carved stalactite design. The wooden doors are inlaid with mother-of-pearl, and the main *mihrab*, again with a stalactite design, is heavily gilded.

The Yeni Camii was far more than a mosque, and originally it had a hospital, school, bath-house, two fountains, tomb and market attached. Raising revenue was part and parcel of the life of a *külliye* (mosque complex) and it's perhaps appropriate that the lower chambers of the Kasir (royal entrance), at the northeast corner of the mosque, now house the **Ayvalık and Aydın Agricultural Foundation** shops (Mon–Fri & Sun 8am–noon & 1–5pm, Sat 8am–1pm), selling good-quality olives, olive oil and other produce at cheaper prices than regular shops.

## Mısır Carşısı: the Spice Bazaar

The most atmospheric part of the mosque complex is the **Mısır Çarşısı** (daily 9am–7pm), the "Egyptian Bazaar", better known as the **Spice Bazaar**. The origins of the name are uncertain. In the Byzantine era, the site of the bazaar was the corn-trading centre, and "Mısır" means both "corn" and "Egypt" in Turkish. On the other hand, the name may derive from the fact that many of the Ottoman Empire's spices were imported from Egypt and were flogged in the "new" spice bazaar, or from the fact that it was endowed with customs duties from Cairo. Completed a few years before the Yeni Camii, this L-shaped bazaar has 88 vaulted rooms and chambers above the entryways at the ends of the halls. One of these, over the main entrance opposite the ferry ports, now houses the Greek restaurant, *Pandeli's* (see p.197).

Despite its name, the range and quality of spices in the bazaar is not what it was and prices aren't cheap – the shops in the surrounding maze of alleys, whether they are selling pistachios fresh in from the southeast of the country to dried mulberries or figs from the Aegean, are generally better value than what's

▲ The Spice Bazaar

on offer inside. Of more interest in the bazaar itself are the varieties of *lokum* (Turkish delight) and the many bizarre concoctions being passed off as aphrodisiacs.

Outside and to the right as you approach from the Yeni Camii is a line of shops stocking coffee, dried fruit, spices and just about everything you'd need to set up your own kebab stall. There are some famous **shops** in these narrow streets, including Ali Muhiddin Haci Bekir's sweet shop, established in 1777, and Kurukahveci Mehemet Efendi's, a coffee emporium (see p.230), with perpetual queues outside its fine (and for İstanbul, rare) Art Deco building.

Another interesting place to explore is the **garden/pet bazaar** on the east side of the Spice Bazaar – though the cafés here are expensive and the front-of-house hustlers persistent. It's not a place for the sentimental either: chicks and ducklings cluck frantically in open-topped cardboard boxes, whilst goldfinches flit from side to side of their tiny bamboo cages. There's even a leech doctor, the tools of his trade wriggling uninvitingly in an enormous glass jar. More prosaic, though, are the bags of seeds and decorative bamboo plants on sale here.

# Tahtakale

**Tahtakale** ("Wooden Castle"), the incredibly busy traditional bazaar quarter west of Sirkeci and northwest of Eminönü, is lifted from mundanity by the presence of one of the city's best small mosques, the **Rüstem Paşa Camii**. Mosque aside, there's little to do except wander the cobbled streets, watching the few surviving *hamals* (stevedores) bent double under their loads, or wonder at just who is going to buy the mountains of brushes, pans, coat hangers and other cheap plastic household paraphernalia on sale here. There are a few locally

made items, such as hand-carved wooden spoons, on display, but the vast majority of stuff is imported from the Far East. One building of note is the **Tahtakale Hamam Çarşısı** dating back to the early years of the Ottoman conquest of the city in the fifteenth century. Built as a *hamam*, it continues to serve the local community – but as yet another shopping centre rather than a bath-house. The cheap clothes sold here are not much of a draw, but there's a pleasant café, the *İstanbul*, selling coffee, tea, cakes and snacks beneath the *hamam's* central dome – an oasis of tranquillity after the hustle and bustle of the streets outside.

## Rüstem Paşa Camii

**Rüstem Paşa Camii**, opposite the Tahtakale Hamam Çarşısı, is one of the most attractive of İstanbul's smaller mosques. Built for Süleyman the Magnificent's grand vizier, Rüstem Paşa (who was responsible, along with Roxelana, for the murder of the heir apparent Mustafa), the mosque dates from the year he died, 1561, and was probably built in his memory by his widow Mihrimah, Roxelana's daughter.

Designed by Sinan on an awkward site, the mosque is easy to miss as you wander the streets below. At ground level on the Golden Horn side, an arcade of shops occupies the vaults, from where a flight of steps leads up to the mosque's terrace. Through an attractive entrance portal is a wide courtyard and a tiled double portico along the west wall. It's almost like entering a theatre, with the tiles of the portico as backdrop and the mosque interior, whose dimensions are not immediately apparent, backstage.

The **tiles**, inside and out, are among the best in any mosque in Turkey. They date from the finest period of İznik tile production, when techniques for producing tomato-red – slightly raised above the other colours – had been perfected. Designs covering the walls, piers and pillars, and decorating the *mihrab* and *mimber*, include famous panels of tulips and carnations and geometric patterns. Inside are galleries supported by pillars and marble columns and about as many windows as the structure of the mosque will allow. Only the inappropriate and ugly nineteenth-century painting detracts from the overall effect.

3

# The Grand Bazaar and around

The city's **Kapılı Çarşı**, known to the majority of foreigners as the **Grand Bazaar**, is the most famous and largest of its type in the world. Naturally enough, nearly every visitor to İstanbul opts to spend at least some time wandering its myriad alleyways and soaking up the atmosphere. Far fewer, however, explore the areas surrounding the Grand Bazaar – which is a shame, as there are a huge number of worthwhile sights here.

East of the bazaar, on either side of Divan Yolu, historically the main artery through the Byzantine and then Ottoman city, are the **Çemberlitaş**, the famed Column of Constantine, and the **Çemberlitaş Hamamı**, one of the city's most popular and atmospheric Turkish baths. To the north, in a neighbourhood that still exudes an air of sanctity and learning, lie arguably İstanbul's finest mosque complex, the **Süleymaniye**, and the nearby ruins of the fourth-century **Aqueduct of Valens**, spanning one of the Old City's busiest thoroughfares, Atatürk Bulvarı, in impressive fashion.

Just west of the bazaar, the **Beyazit Meydanı**, a busy square dominated by the city's earliest imperial mosque (the impressive Beyazit Camii), attracts itinerant vendors and students streaming in and out of the main gates of İstanbul University. Further west are **Laleli and Aksaray**, adjacent districts that have acquired a certain notoriety in recent years but have an atmosphere all of their own and contain some worthwhile Byzantine and Ottoman monuments – as well as some interesting places to eat. Running steeply down to the Sea of Marmara south of the bazaar, the narrow streets of **Gedikpaşa** and **Kumkapı** are scattered with churches of various denominations (including the Armenian Patriarchate) and a notable Ottoman *hamam*. The famous fish restaurants of Kumkapı are probably the liveliest place to spend an evening on the south side of the Golden Horn.

It's easy enough **to walk** to all the areas covered in this chapter, but if you want to save your legs you can take the **tram** from Sultanahmet and get off at either Çembirlitaş or Beyazit (for the Grand Bazaar or Süleymaniye complex), or Laleli (for the Şehzade and Laleli mosques). For Kumkapı, either walk down from the Grand Bazaar area or take the suburban *banliyo* **train** from Cankurtaran.

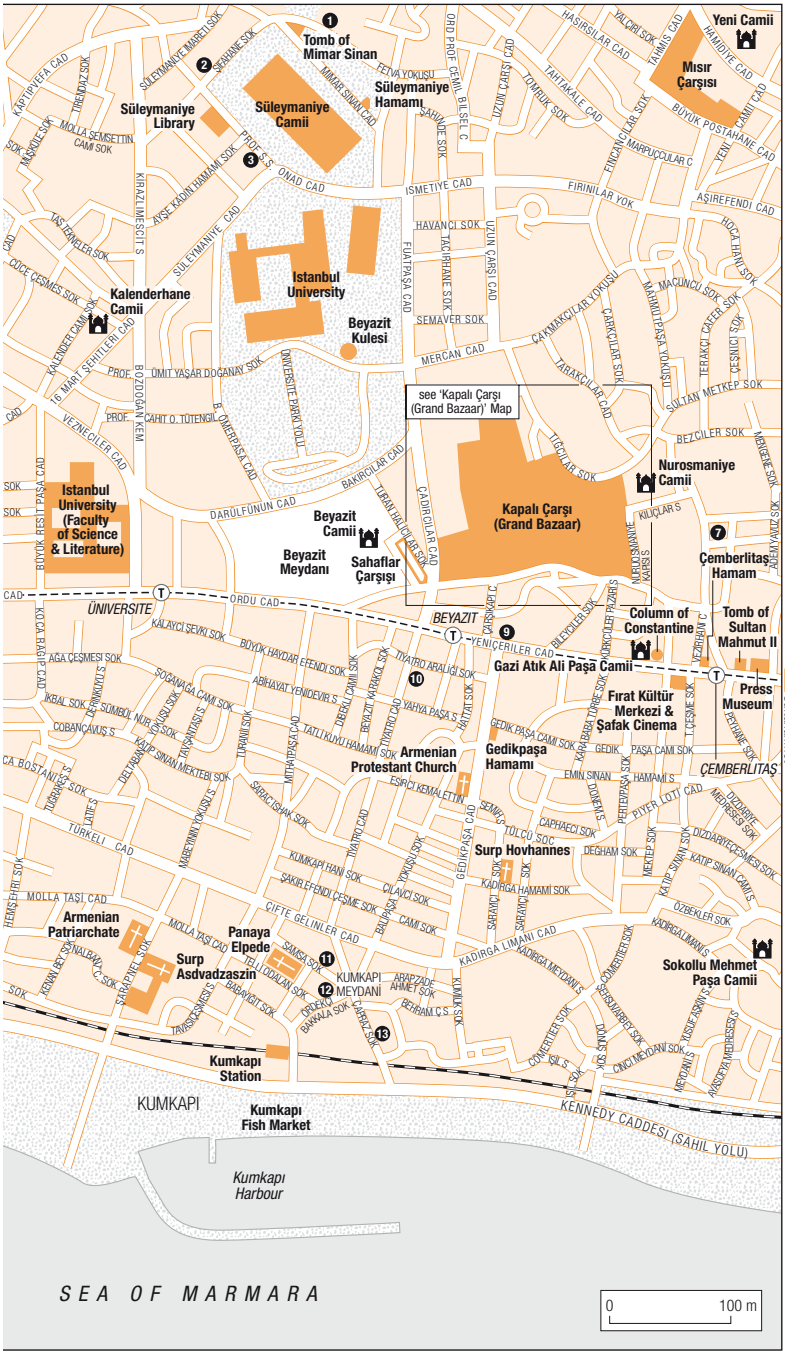
# Kapalı Çarşı: the Grand Bazaar

With 66 streets and alleys, over 4000 shops, numerous storehouses, money-changers and banks, a mosque, post office, police station, private security guards and its own health centre, İstanbul's **Grand Bazaar** (Mon–Sat 9am–7pm), or **Kapalı Çarşı** (Covered Bazaar), is said to be the largest enclosed bazaar in the world. In addition to the retail outlets, the *hans*, or market halls, in and around the bazaar are the location of humming workshops, where craftsmen make some of the goods sold in the bazaar.

The bazaar was built soon after the Ottoman conquest of the city in 1453. Originally, a particular type of shop was found in a certain area, with street names reflecting the nature of the businesses. Many of these distinctions are now blurred as the trade in certain goods has moved on, while that of others has expanded to meet new demands. In Ottoman times, the bazaar consisted of both a covered and an open area centred on a *bedesten*, a domed building where foreign trade took place and valuable goods were stored. In İstanbul, the commercial centre was based around two *bedestens*, both inside the covered bazaar: the **Iç Bedesten** (Old Bazaar) probably dates from the time of the Conquest, while the **Sandal Bedesteni** was added in the sixteenth century to cope with the quantity of trade in fine fabrics that the capital attracted. However, the bazaar extends much further than the limits of the covered area, sprawling into the streets that lead down to the Golden Horn. This whole area was once controlled by strict laws laid down by the trade guilds, thus reducing competition between traders – each shop could support just one owner and his apprentice, and successful merchants were not allowed to expand their businesses. Similar unwritten laws control market forces among traders in the Grand Bazaar even today.

▲ The Grand Bazaar

THE GRAND BAZAAR & AROUND
N
Aquaduct of Valens
Museum of Caricatures
Saraçhane Parkı
Şehzade Camii
Arkeoloji Parkı
İstanbul Municipal Building
AKSARAY
Valide Camii
Taşhan
Laleli Camii
LALELI
YUSUFPAŞA
Mesipaşa Camii
Yenikapı Station
Havaş Airport Bus Stop
Yenikapı Waterfront Parkı
Yenikapı Ferry Terminal
KENNEDY CADDESİ
ŞEHZADEBAŞI CAD
ATATÜRK BULVARI
HORHOR CAD
MİLLET CADDESİ
ADNAN MENDERES CADDESİ
Topkapı
Zeytinburnu
Ferries to Yalova (Termal & İznik)
EATING, DRINKING & NIGHTLIFE
Ağa Kapısı 1
Daruzzafiye 2
Erenler Çay Bahçesi 9
Fes Café 7
Hatay Sofrası 5
Kaburga Sofrası 8
Kalamar 13
Kör Agop 12
Olimpiyat 2 11
Orient House 10
Tarihi Kuru Fasuliye 3
Süleymaniye Erzincanlı Ali Baba 3
Van Kahvaltı Sofrası 6
Vefa Bozacısı 4
ACCOMMODATION
Senator Hotel B
Soğüt Hotel A

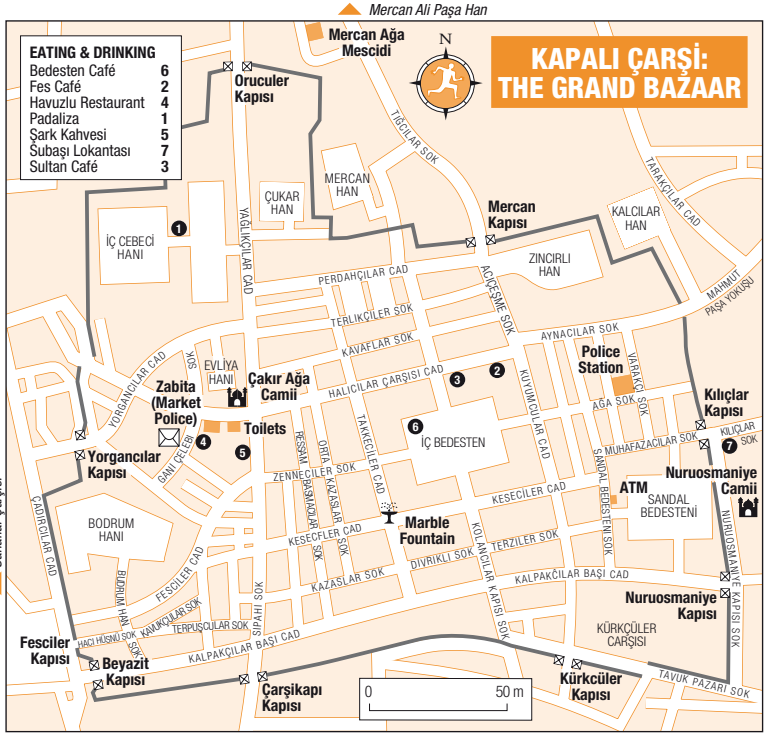

1 Tomb of Mimar Sinan
2 Süleymaniye Library
Süleymaniye Camii
Süleymaniye Hamamı
3
Yeni Camii
Mısır Çarşısı
Kalenderhane Camii
Istanbul University
Beyazit Kulesi
see 'Kapalı Çarşı (Grand Bazaar)' Map
Kapalı Çarşı (Grand Bazaar)
Nurosmaniye Camii
Istanbul University (Faculty of Science & Literature)
Beyazit Camii
Beyazit Meydanı
Sahaflar Çarşışı
7 Çemberlitaş Hamam
Column of Constantine
Tomb of Sultan Mahmut II
9 Gazi Atık Ali Paşa Camii
Fırat Kültür Merkezi & Şafak Cinema
Press Museum
10 Armenian Protestant Church
Gedikpaşa Hamamı
Surp Hovhannes
Armenian Patriarchate
Panaya Elpede
11 Surp Asdvadzazin
12 KUMKAPI MEYDANI
13 Kumkapı Station
Sokollu Mehmet Paşa Camii
KUMKAPI
Kumkapı Fish Market
KENNEDY CADDESI (SAHIL YOLU)
Kumkapı Harbour
SEA OF MARMARA
ÜNIVERSITE
BEYAZIT
ÇEMBERLITAŞ
Sultanahmet
0 100 m

## Visiting the bazaar

The **best time to visit** is during the week, as Saturday sees the bazaar and its surroundings crowded with local shoppers. Expect to get lost, as most streets are either poorly marked or their signs are hidden beneath goods hung up on display. However, try finding Kavaflar Sokak for **shoes**, Terlikçiler Sokak for **slippers**, Kalpakçılar Başı and Kuyumcular *caddesi*s for **gold**, and Tavuk Pazarı Sokak, Kürkçüler Sokak, Perdahçılar Caddesi and Bodrum Hanı for **leather clothing**. **Carpet-sellers** are just about everywhere, with more expensive collector's pieces on sale on Halıcılar Çarşısı, Takkeciler and Keseciler *caddesi*s, and cheaper ones in the Iç Cebeci Hanı. **Ceramics** and leather and kilim **bags** can be found along Yağlıkçılar Caddesi, just off it in Çukur Han, and also along Keseciler Caddesi. For details of specific shops, see p.225.

The Iç Bedesten, located at the centre of the maze, was traditionally reserved for the most precious wares because it could be locked at night. You'll still find some silver and gold on sale, but these days the emphasis is more on reproduction brass ship-fittings, fake scrimshaw and souvenirs. For a more authentic experience, check out Kalcılar Han where you will see **silver** being cast and worked with skills that have been handed down over the generations.

Whether you actually enjoy wandering around here is very much a matter of temperament and mood; you'll either find the hassle from traders intolerable – though the many **cafés** in the bazaar (see p.190) do offer a welcome respite – or you'll be flattered to be paid more attention in one afternoon than you've received in your entire life. Receiving the sales patter from a persuasive trader



or three is part of the Grand Bazaar experience – just don't (and this is easier said than done) put your hand in your pocket unless you actually want to buy something. The Society of Kapalı Çarşı Traders polices the area, issuing warnings to those deemed too intimidating, so if you find yourself uncomfortably targeted look around for one of the maroon-uniformed security guards.



## East of the Grand Bazaar

A short way southeast of the Grand Bazaar, where Vezirhanı Caddesi intersects with Divan Yolu, is the **Çemberlitaş** ("the hooped stone"), a burnt column of masonry, also known as the **Column of Constantine**. Scaffolded and undergoing extensive renovation at the time of writing, it was erected by Constantine the Great in 330 AD, to commemorate the city's dedication as capital of the Roman Empire. For the next sixteen centuries, the city was known as Constantinople. The column consists of seven drums of porphyry surmounted by a statue of the emperor. The iron hoops from which it derives its Turkish name were bound around the joints in the porphyry after an earthquake in 416 damaged the column. The current scorched condition dates from the great fire of 1779, which destroyed much of the surrounding area.

Across Vezirhanı Caddesi from the column is the celebrated four-hundred-year-old **Çemberlitaş Hamamı** (daily 6am–midnight; 29TL, 46TL with massage; ⓦ www.cemberlitashamami.com.tr), founded in the sixteenth century by Nur Banu, one of the most powerful of the valide sultans. Its central location means that the masseurs are well used to foreigners, making it a good place to be initiated into the rites of the Turkish bath.

Continuing east along Divan Yolu soon brings you to a walled **cemetery**, dominated by the 1838 **Tomb of Sultan Mahmut II** (daily 9am–5pm; free), a large, ornate *türbe* containing the coffins of Mahmut and his son (Sultan Abdül Aziz) and grandson (Sultan Abdül Hamit) as well as some of his female relatives. The well-tended cemetery contains dozens of graves of lesser statesmen, and includes that of **Ziya Gökalp**, the architect of Turkish nationalism, who died in 1924. Next to the cemetery, the rather run-down **Press Museum** (Basın Müzesi; Mon–Sat 10am–6pm; free) offers a fascinating insight into the world of the Turkish press, dating back to the sixteenth century. Exhibits include copies of newspapers from the early Republican era, including one from 1928 in both the Arabic and Roman scripts (Arabic was banned in 1928 as part of Atatürk's modernization programme), which features a cartoon where anthropomorphized Arabic letters are being chained up and led away into oblivion. Upstairs is a room devoted to the (depressingly numerous) number of Turkish journalists slain in the course of their work – the most recent addition being that of the İstanbul Armenian Hrant Dink, assassinated by an ultra-nationalist youth in January 2007.

From Divan Yolu, a north turn up Vezirhanı Caddesi leads to the **Nuruosmaniye Camii** at the back of the Grand Bazaar. Begun by Mahmut I in 1748 and finished seven years later by Osman III, this mosque was the first and most impressive of the city's European-influenced, Baroque-style mosques, and set the fashion in Baroque and Rococo architecture for the following century.

Tracking back a short way on Yeniçeriler Caddesi, the western extension of Divan Yolu, the **Gazi Atık Ali Paşa Camii** is one of the oldest mosques in the city. It was built in 1496 by Atık Ali Paşa, a eunuch who rose to the rank of

grand vizier under Sultan Beyazit II to a design – a rectangular room divided unequally by a huge arch – that predates that of the larger, more famous mosques. The gardens boast a quiet café that offers *nargile* and is frequented by students from the nearby university and migrant Turks from the Balkans.



## The Süleymaniye Külleyesi

Northwest of the Grand Bazaar, on a hill overlooking the Golden Horn, is the **Sülemaniye Külleyesi**, a complex of buildings clustered around, and including, the magnificent Süleymaniye Camii. Built by the renowned architect **Mimar Sinan** (see box opposite) in honour of his most illustrious patron, Süleyman the Magnificent, it is arguably his greatest achievement. When the imperial entourage moved to Topkapı, the grounds of the Old Palace were given over to the new complex, in what must have been a most attractive location overlooking the Golden Horn and its waterside parks and gardens. Süleymaniye Camii and its satellites, completed in just seven years from 1550, are built along traditional Islamic lines. The mosque is centralized beneath a dome at the very centre of the entire complex, but the whole achieves a perfection of form and a monumentality of appearance that set it apart from other Ottoman architecture.

Approaching from the university side, the first street encountered before entering the mosque precincts is Sıddık Samı Onal Caddesi, formerly **Tıryakı Çarşısı**, "market of the addicts". The name derives from the fact that the coffeehouses in this street, whose rents augmented the upkeep of the foundation, used also to serve hashish, to be smoked on the premises or taken away. The present line of student cafés here may be seedy but are evidently nothing like as interesting as the establishments they replaced.

Behind the shopfronts lies the **Süleymaniye Library** (Mon–Sat 8.30am–5pm), housed in the Evvel and Sani *medreses*. These buildings, mirror images of each other, are situated around shady garden courtyards. Süleyman established the library in an effort to bring together collections of books scattered throughout the city: there are some 80,00 manuscripts stored here, gathered from eleven palaces and dating from the reigns of six different sultans. In theory, the library is open to the public, though they don't seem too keen on visitors and you'll need to leave your passport at the gate and wear an identifier tag around you neck. However, unless you're a specialist, there's little to be seen inside.

Other buildings of interest in the vicinity include the **Tomb of Mimar Sinan**, on Mimar Sinan Caddesi. The tomb is in a triangular garden, which was the location of the architect's house during construction work. At the corner of the triangle is an octagonal eaved fountain. Perhaps there is no nicer way of being remembered than by providing the gift of water to passing strangers, but in Sinan's case it nearly caused his downfall. The fountain, as well as Sinan's house and garden, were liberally supplied with water, but when the mosques further down the pipeline began to run short, Sinan was charged with diverting the water supply for his household needs. The tomb itself has a magnificent carved turban, a measure of the architect's high rank – the eulogy written on the south wall of the garden picks out the bridge at Büyükçekmece as Sinan's greatest achievement.

Otherwise, the buildings of the Süleymaniye complex served the usual functions. On Şıfahane Sokak is the *imaret* (soup kitchen), which despite its ornate design was constructed as a public kitchen supplying food for the local poor (fittingly, it

### Mimar Sinan: master builder

Many of the finest works of Ottoman civil and religious architecture throughout Turkey can be traced to one man, a genius who had the good luck to come of age in a rich, expanding empire willing to put its considerable resources at his disposal. **Mimar Sinan** (1489–1588) served as court architect to three sultans – Süleyman the Magnificent, Selim II and Murat III – but principally to the first, who owed much of his reputation for "magnificence" to this gifted technician.

Little is known of Sinan's early life except that he was born in a small village near Kayseri, the son of Greek or Armenian Christian parents. Even his birth date is open to question, since it is established that he was conscripted into the janissaries in 1513, which would have made him a good ten years older than the typical recruit. In any case, prolonged military service in all of the major Ottoman campaigns of the early sixteenth century compelled Sinan to travel the length and breadth of south-eastern Europe and the Middle East, giving him the opportunity to become familiar with the best Islamic – and Christian – monumental architecture there. Sinan was immediately able to apply what he had learned in the role of military engineer, building bridges, siegeworks, harbours and even ships, which earned him the admiration of his superiors. These included Sultan Süleyman, who in recognition of his abilities appointed him court architect in April 1536.

During Sinan's first twelve years in the job, he did little out of the ordinary, undertaking only relatively minor public works throughout Anatolia and the Balkans. In 1548, he completed his first major religious commission, İstanbul's Şehzade Camii (see p.96), and shortly thereafter embarked on a rapid succession of ambitious projects in and around the capital, including the Süleymaniye Camii (see below) and the waterworks leading from the Belgrade Forest. After exhausting the potential of the great city, Sinan turned his matured attention to the provinces, gracing Edirne with the Selimiye Camii between 1569 and 1575 (see p.302), and a decade later fulfilling a long-standing wish as a devout Muslim by overseeing the restoration of the Harem-i-Zerif mosque in Mecca.

Unusually for his time, Sinan could make an objective assessment of his talents: he regarded most of his pre-1550 works as apprentice pieces, and posterity has generally agreed with the self-evaluations in his memoirs, the *Tezkeret-ül-Bünyan*. Despite temptations to luxury, he lived and died equally modestly, being buried in a simple tomb he made for himself in his garden in the grounds of the Süleymaniye Camii – the last of more than five hundred constructions by Sinan, large and small, throughout the empire.

now houses a restaurant) and *kervansaray* (hotel). A *mektep* (primary school) stands on the corner of Sıddık Sami Onal Caddesi and Süleymaniye Caddesi, and there are Koran schools and a language school, which taught the proper pronunciation of Arabic for reading the Koran. There's also a triangular wrestling ground (now used as a car park), located to the south of the cemetery.

The **Süleymaniye Hamamı**, built by Sinan in 1557, is on the corner of Mimar Sinan Caddesi and Dökmeciler Hamamı Sokak (daily 6.30am–midnight; 60TL with massage, scrub and return transfer to a hotel in the Old City; ⓦ www.suleymaniyehamami.com). Legend has it that the great architect took all his baths here from 1557 to 1588. It is a beautiful building, but in need of some attention.

## Süleymaniye Camii

The **Süleymaniye Camii** itself is preceded by a rectangular courtyard, whose portico stands on columns of porphyry, Marmara marble and pink Egyptian

granite (said to have come from the royal box of the Hippodrome), and by four tapering minarets. Semi-domes supporting the huge central dome to the east and west alternate with arches, in front of which is a set of three smaller domes. The east and west flanks of the mosque are distinguished by two-storey loggias, accessible from within the mosque, which support an eave protecting those performing their ablutions at the taps below.

The doorway into the mosque is high and narrow, its wooden doors inlaid with ebony, mother-of-pearl and ivory. Move inside, and the sense of light and space is paramount – a dome 53m high (twice its diameter), surmounting a perfect square of 26.5m. There are no side aisles, and the double panes of two hundred windows ensure a softly filtered light. The dome collapsed during the earthquake of 1766, while in the nineteenth century further damage was done by the Fossati brothers, whose attempt at Ottoman Baroque redecoration jars with the inherent simplicity of the building. The original crystal lamps have also been replaced by glassware supported on a rather cumbersome iron frame, though the stained glass of İbrahim the Mad remains, above a graceful marble *mimber*.

In the adjacent **cemetery** (daily 5.30am–8pm) are located the tombs of Süleyman the Magnificent and Haseki Hürrem, or Roxelana, his powerful wife. Süleyman's tomb is particularly impressive: its doors are inlaid with ebony, ivory, silver and jade, and his turban is huge. Above, the spectacular inner dome has been faithfully restored in red, black and gold, inlaid with glittering ceramic stars. Both here, and in the neighbouring tomb of Roxelana, original tiles and some fine stained glass have survived the centuries.

## The Aqueduct of Valens and around

North of the major thoroughfare of Şehzadebaşı Caddesi, which runs between Beyazit Meydanı and Atatürk Bulvarı, are three worthwhile monuments from quite different eras. By far the oldest is the magnificent **Aqueduct of Valens**. Recently renovated, the aqueduct was originally built during the late fourth-century waterworks programme carried out by Emperor Valens, and was part of a distribution network that included reservoirs in the Belgrade Forest and various cisterns located around the city centre. It was in use right up to the end of the nineteenth century, having been kept in good repair by successive rulers, who maintained a constant supply of water to the city in the face of both drought and siege. More than six hundred of its original thousand metres are still standing, though the best single viewpoint is where the aqueduct crosses Atatürk Bulvarı – here it is two storeys high and reaches a height of 18.5m.

The **Şehzade Camii**, constructed in 1548, stands in a pleasant park area southeast of the aqueduct. This "Mosque of the Prince" is so called because Süleyman the Magnificent had it built (by the ubiquitous Sinan) in honour of his son Mehmet, who died of the plague aged 21. It is neither as large nor as dramatically situated as the Sülemaniye Camii, but it is, nonetheless, one of Sinan's greatest works – though sadly neglected by most visitors.

To the east is the Byzantine Church of Kyriotissa, probably built around the start of the thirteenth century on the foundations of an earlier church. It was renamed **Kalenderhane Camii** after the Kalender dervishes who converted it into a *tekke* (Dervish monastery) after the Conquest. It has the cruciform ground plan typical of Byzantine churches of its time, with much of the marble

revetment and sculpture still in place. The area just north of the Kalenderhane, where one of the final arches of the aqueduct spans Onaltı Mart Şehit Caddesi, is now an atmospheric bohemian student quarter, with a few cheap cafés. For a more traditional feel, follow the line of the aqueduct back west for a couple of hundred metres, to *Vefa Bozacısı*. Established in 1876 and little changed since, this is oldest surviving purveyors in the city of *boza*, a fermented millet drink once drunk throughout the Ottoman world. Atatürk himself frequented the place, and the glass he drank from is proudly on display.



## Beyazit Meydanı

Just to the west of the Grand Bazaar, **Beyazit Meydanı**, the main square of bustling Beyazit, is the principal approach to İstanbul University. Here, entered through a small *bit pazarı*, or flea market, is the famous **Sahaflar Çarşısı**, the secondhand-booksellers' market (although many of the books on sale nowadays are new). A little enclave of wonderful shops, it's run by some of the quarter's best-known and worst-tempered characters. The Ottoman book market dates back to the eighteenth century, but long before that there was a Byzantine book and paper market on the site. After the Conquest, it lost its original identity to the spoonmakers, though booksellers gradually moved back in once printing and publishing were legalized in the second half of the eighteenth century.

Still, the Ottomans were uneasy with human pictorial representation and used calligraphy for artistic expression. On the west side of the square, the tradition is reflected in a small **Museum of Calligraphy** (Vakıf Hat Sanatları Müzesi; Mon–Fri 9am–4pm; free), formerly a theological college, now containing some interesting examples of this highly developed art form, though the building was closed for renovation at the time of writing.

To the east of the square, **Beyazit Camii**, completed in 1506, is the oldest surviving imperial mosque in the city. It has a sombre courtyard full of richly coloured marble, including twenty columns of verd-antique, red granite and porphyry. Inside, the building is a perfect square of exactly the same proportions as the courtyard (although the aisles make it feel elongated). The sixteenth-century fittings, including the carvings of the balustrade, *mihrab* and *mimber*, are all highly crafted. Walking straight past the mosque from Beyazit Meydanı and on through the Sahaflar Çarşısı, you'll find another entrance (the Fesciler Kapısı) to the Grand Bazaar.

## İstanbul University

**İstanbul University** commands an impressive position at the crown of one of the city's seven hills; indeed, the fire tower located in the grounds, **Beyazit Kulesi**, is a landmark all over the city. The main building and some of its subsidiaries have a certain grandeur, especially when approached through the main gateway (aim for 9am in term time, when the national anthem, the *İstiklâl Marşı*, is played and everyone in the vicinity freezes for the duration). Given that there are 60,00 undergraduate students and 6000 lectures, it's hardly surprising that the area is extremely busy.

İstanbul University has been a centre of **political activity** of the Left, the Right and Muslim fundamentalists, with occasional demonstrations, lock-ins and even violence on the campus. Parts of the university have since been relocated to Avcilar on the Edirne highway, in a partially successful attempt to defuse unrest. Feelings still run high about wearing religious garb, though and in 1999, trouble erupted over the ban on headscarf-clad female students attending courses – an issue which remains controversial to this day.

The university occupies the site of the Old Palace of Mehmet the Conqueror – imperial residence from 1453 until it burned to the ground in 1541 and was rebuilt to serve as a residence for concubines who had been retired after the accession of a new sultan. What's now the main university building was constructed by the French architect Bourgeois, in 1866, to house the Ministry of War. This moved to Ankara in 1923, along with the other departments of state, when the university (which until then had been scattered around the city in various *medreses* of the imperial mosques) was relocated here.

Apart from the monumental gateway, where you enter the campus, the most impressive building on the site is a small **köşk**, to the right of the entrance. This is part of the original Bourgeois complex and has Baroque interior decoration.

# Laleli and Aksaray

Heading west from Beyazit, you arrive at an ugly spaghetti junction, where Atatürk Bulvarı crosses Ordu Caddesi. This is the main focus of the districts of **Aksaray** and **Laleli**, whose atmosphere is distinctly different from anywhere else in Istanbul. It is not immediately appealing, and the constant roar of traffic on Ordu, Millet and Vatan *caddesi*s can be dispiriting, but give it a chance and the area exhibits a certain gritty charm. There are a number of worthwhile sights here that lie well off most visitors' radars, and, thanks to an influx of migrant workers from across Turkey, several restaurants specializing in **regional cuisine** (see the *Eating out* colour section).

Many of the people around here are from Russia, Eastern Europe (Laleli is mainly Bulgarian, Moldovan, Romanian) and the Turkic states of Central Asia. In the early years following the collapse of the Soviet Union, it was the centre of the so-called "suitcase trade", as poor traders arrived with cases loaded with odds and sods to sell, bought up local goods and sold them back in their home country. It's not exactly a rich area today, but most people coming from the former Soviet states now are here to spend, spend, spend, and the shops are full of some of the most outrageously nouveau riche and designer (both fake and genuine) fashion items you're likely to see anywhere.

Turkish women avoid Aksaray and Laleli, as it still has a reputation (justly so) for prostitution, though this is now confined to the quarter southwest of the Atatürk Bulvarı/Ordu Caddesi crossroads, where shady clubs and importuners abound. Indeed, local traders and hoteliers are gradually reinventing the area north of Ordu Caddesi as **Şehzadebaşı** to avoid such disreputable connotations.

## Laleli Camii and around

The most obvious monument here is the **Laleli Camii**, on Ordu Caddesi. Built in the Ottoman Baroque tradition of Nuruosmaniye and the Ayazma Camii in Üsküdar, it nonetheless owes more to traditional Ottoman architecture than

ideas imported from Europe. It was founded by Mustafa III, whose octagonal tomb is located at the southeast gate. Selim III, who was assassinated by his janissaries, is also buried there.

The main Baroque elements in the mosque complex are the use of ramps (including one that the reigning sultan would have used to ride up to his loge), the grand staircases and the exquisite detail, noticeable in the window grilles of the tomb and in the carved eaves of the *sebil* (drinking fountain). Inside, a mass of pillars dominates, especially to the west, where the columns beneath the main dome seem to crowd those supporting the galleries into the walls. Back outside, the foundations of the mosque are used as a covered **market**, selling the cheapest of clothes and acting as an inducement for the local populace to worship at the mosque.

At the back of the Laleli complex, between Fethi Bey and Gençturk *caddesi*s, is another smaller covered bazaar, the **Taşhan**, originally built as an inn in 1793 by Sultan Mustafa III to entertain his guests. The building has been restored as a two-tiered bazaar surrounding two open courtyards. There are a couple of restaurants located in the vaults beneath, a pleasant café in the courtyard, and the shops themselves are stocked with designer clothing of variable quality and taste.

Back towards Sultanahmet and fronting Ordu Caddesi is an imposing building housing the **İstanbul University Faculty of Science and Literature**. Completed in 1944, it was built according to the precepts of the Second National Architectural Movement and designed by two of the pioneering Turkish architects of the day: Sedad Hakki Eldem and Emin Haid Onat. Essentially modernist but incorporating a few elements of traditional Turkish architecture, it boasts a monumental but plain, almost brutal, facade – and it couldn't be more of a contrast to ornate Lalei Camii, just down the road. Later in date but worth seeking out (you can hardly miss if even if you wanted to) is the colossal **İstanbul Municipality Building**, designed by Nevzat Oral in 1953 and the first truly international-modern building in the city. A rectangular structure with a grid facade, mounted on a columnular base, it has a definite presence.

On Mesipaşa Caddesi, a block south of Ordu Caddesi more or less opposite the Laleli Camii, is the beautiful **Mesipaşa Camii**. Converted into a mosque in 1501, it was once the monastery Church of Myrelaion dating back to 922 AD. Although the northwest wall is marred by a modern pine porch, the remainder of the outside has been lovingly restored. Of typical "cross in square" plan, topped by a rotunda with a very shallow dome, it is all curves and grace, and the slim red bricks used in its construction are in better condition than most Byzantine churches of this type in the city.

## Gedikpaşa and Kumkapı

The areas directly south of the Grand Bazaar, **Gedikpaşa** and **Kumkapı**, centred around three major streets – Gedik Paşa, Tiyatro and Mithat Paşa *caddesi*s – that run at steep angles down to the Sea of Maramara, lack any sites of real note but are great places in which to wander. In addition to a scattering of small mosques, there are a number of nineteenth-century Armenian Apostolic and Greek Orthodox **churches**, attesting to the districts' cosmopolitan past. A handful of Greeks still live around here, rather more Armenians, and

you're almost as likely to hear Kurdish spoken as Turkish, as more recent times have seen a wave of migrant workers from the impoverished southeast of Turkey arrive to set up homes and businesses in these narrow streets. Hand-cart pushers selling everything from freshly squeezed orange juice to boiled corn-on-the-cob and rice pilaf to plump-red cherries sweat their way up and down the hill, crying out their wares.

A couple of hundred metres below Ordu Caddesi, the **Gedikpaşa Hamamı** (entrance on Emin Sinan Hamamı Sokak; daily 6am–midnight; 25TL, 40TL with massage, 60TL massage and scrub; Ⓦ www.gedikpasahamami.com) was built in 1475 and is looking a little frayed round the edges but is a fine Ottoman bath-house, with a big white dome punctured by the usual, tiny bottle-glass windows that allow the light (on a sunny day) to come streaming in. More or less opposite the west wall of the *hamam* is the **Armenian Protestant Church**. The current, handsome rendered-stone building dates back to 1914, when it was rebuilt on the site of an earlier wooden church (1850) that suffered the same fate as so many wood structures in the Old City – destroyed by fire. The church serves as a community centre for the mainly impoverished local Armenians, many of whom only arrived here from the former Soviet Armenia post-1990. Southeast of here, on Sarayıçi Sokak is the late nineteenth-century Armenian Orthodox church of **Surp Hovhannes** (St Joseph' s), best visited, like virtually all the "working" Armenian and Greek Orthodox churches in İstanbul, on a Sunday morning, when there's likely to be a service. The substantial domed Greek Orthodox church of Kumkapı's **Panaya Elpeda**, with its gated entrance on Gerdanlık Sokak, dates back to the fifteenth century but has been rebuilt many times – the current, attractive Neoclassical structure belongs firmly in the nineteenth century. It contains one of the city's many *ayazmas* (sacred springs), but the caretakers aren't keen on letting visitors in. Further down, on cobbled Çaparız Sokak, which leads to the suburban railway line running parallel to the sea, is a dense mass of **fish restaurants** (over forty of them), which erupt, especially on Friday and Saturday evening, into a frenzy of eating, drinking (mainly *rakı*), smoking, dancing (to *fasil* music) and more drinking. It's not exactly local (most of the areas' inhabitants are too poor to dine out here) but is largely Turks from elsewhere in the city out to party.

If you have any interest at all in İstanbul's Christian minorities, the one unmissable site here is the Armenian Apostolic church of **Surp Asdvadzaszin** (known in Turkish as the Meryem Ana Kilisesi or Church of the Virgin Mary), dating back to 1641 – though much of what you see today dates from a rebuilding in 1886. This is the one Armenian church where you're guaranteed to see a sizeable congregation at the Sunday service (8am–noon), as its position, opposite the Armenian Patriarchate, makes it the city's most important. With black-clad priests chanting in front of the gilt altar, shafts of light illuminating the nave, the smell of incense heavy in the air, and members of the soberly dressed congregation kneeling and genuflecting before taking their pew, it's a moving sight.

# 4

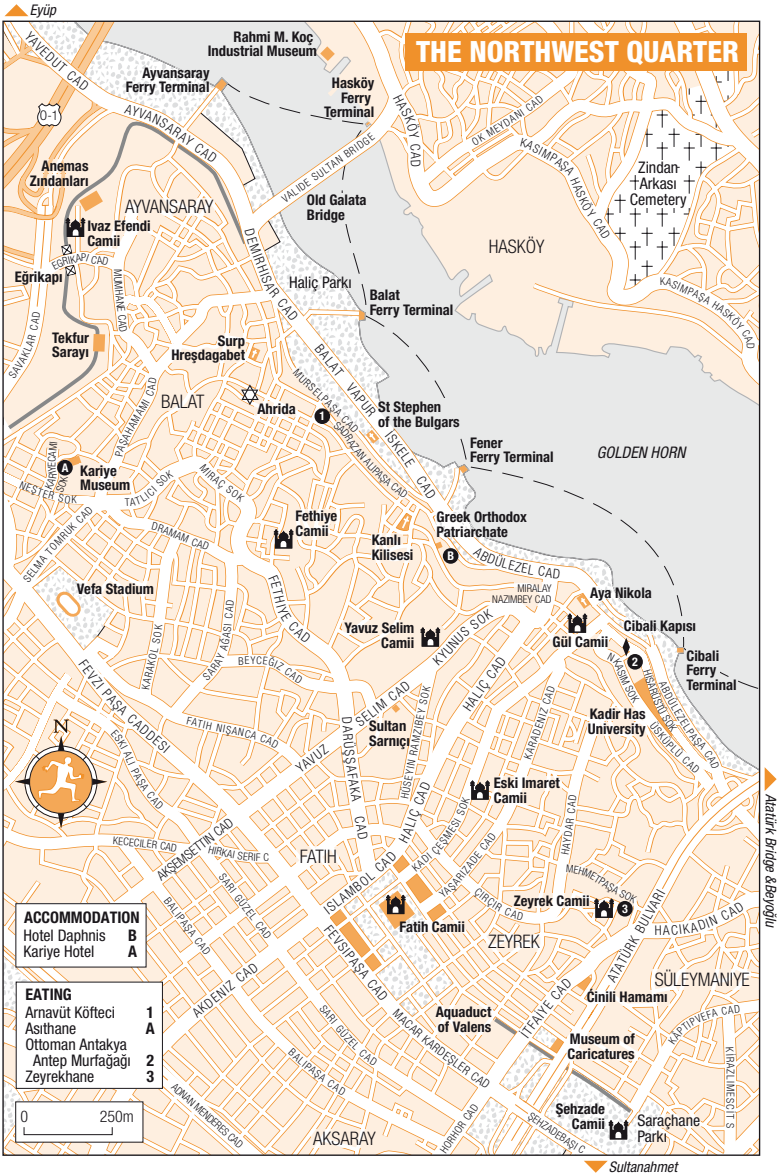
# The northwest quarter



The northwest quarter of the Old City, bounded by the major thoroughfare of Fevzi Paşa Caddesi to the west, the land walls of Theodosius to the north, the waters of the Golden Horn to the east and the traffic-choked highway of Atatürk Bulvarı to the south, is one of the least visited yet most interesting areas of old İstanbul. The magnificent **Kariye Museum** (once the Byzantine Church of St Saviour in Chora) aside, none of the sites here are major draws. For the most part, the only people you will see are locals going about their daily business – which is, of course, one of the area's greatest attractions. Venturing off the beaten track, however, means that communication can be difficult – few people here speak a foreign language – and you'll need to plan your trip fairly carefully, as mosques are often locked except at prayer times and most of the churches only open for services once a week (or less).

This was once a very cosmopolitan area, with **Muslims**, **Christians**, **Jews** and even gypsies living in close proximity to each other. Most (though not all) of the Christians and Jews have long since departed, and the Muslims that are left, particularly in Fatih, are noted for their orthodoxy. Men in skull-caps, voluminous *şalvar* pants, long shirts and bushy beards are more redolent of Pakistan than Turkey, as are some of the women, draped head to toe in black *chadors*. Many of the area's inhabitants (as in so many other quarters of İstanbul) are migrants from impoverished rural areas in Anatolia, and you may well also hear Kurdish spoken in the streets.

There are several convenient **starting points** to explore the quarter. Perhaps the most pleasant is the ferry up the Golden Horn, from either Karaköy on the north side of the Golden Horn, or Emniönü on the south, to Fener or Balat (hourly 7.45am–9.15pm). To get to Zeyrek, take the tram to Laleli and walk north up the hill; alternatively, the #99 bus from Eminönü will drop you just beyond the Atatürk Bridge, and the #38/E on Atatürk Bulvarı, just below the Zeyrek Camii.




# Zeyrek

Crossing Atatürk Bulvarı brings you into **Zeyrek**, an attractive area notable for its steep, cobbled streets and ramshackle wooden houses interspersed with small mosques. Crossing the road is something of an ordeal – local drivers seem to regard it as a Grand Prix test-track – and the convoluted streets of Zeyrek are

confusing, but there are a handful of interesting sights here, including two former Byzantine churches in contrasting states of repair, and wonderful views back over the Süleymaniye Camii complex.

## The Museum of Caricatures and Humour

The quirky **Karikatür ve Mizah Müzesi** (Museum of Caricatures and Humour: Tues–Sun 9am–4.30pm; free) stands on Atatürk Bulvarı right underneath the Aqueduct of Valens (see p.96), housed in the rooms of Gazanfer Medrese (built in 1599) around a pretty garden courtyard with a marble fountain. Cartoons are an important popular art form in Turkey: most papers employ a number of cartoonists, and the weekly *Gırgır* was the third best-selling comic in the world before many of its employees left to set up the rival *Avni*. The collection includes pieces dating back to 1870, with many exhibits concentrating on political satire. Temporary exhibitions change every week and feature work by both international and Turkish cartoonists, while the museum organizes silk-screen and other workshops, including some for children. There's also a small library, used as much for book-restoration as for reading.

## Çinili Hamamı

The double *hamam* of the **Çinili Hamamı** (daily 8.30am–8pm; 15TL) or "Tiled Baths", on İtfaiye Caddesi, was built for the great sixteenth-century pirate-admiral Barbarossa by the ubiquitous architect Sinan, and has been beautifully restored, though the entrance area is already looking a little the worse for wear. Notice the huge dome (over 18m high) and the marble floors and fountain of the *camekan* (changing room), the enormous, octagonal marble massage table in the main room of the *hararet* (steam room), and the toilets, which are continually flushed by water draining from the *hararet*. There are still a few of the original tiles on the walls in the men's section, but none are evident through the continual clouds of steam in the women's baths.

## Zeyrek Camii

In the heart of Zeyrek nestles **Zeyrek Camii**, the former Church of the Pantocrator, built in the twelfth century and converted into a mosque at the time of the Conquest. The building – reached by turning left off İtfaiye Caddesi, along İbadethane Arkası Sokak – is officially open only at prayer times, though you may be able to persuade the *imam* to open up for you (his house is up the stone steps behind the wooden door, next to the mosque). It originally consisted of two churches and a connecting chapel, built between 1118 and 1136 by John II Comnenus and Empress Irene. The chapel was built as a mausoleum for the Comnenus dynasty and continued to be used as such by the Paleologus dynasty. Although the tombs have been removed, there is still evidence of the graves beneath the pavement. Empress Irene also founded a monastery nearby, which was to become one of the most renowned religious institutions in the empire and later the official residence of the Byzantine court, after the Great Palace had been reduced to ruins. No trace remains of the monastery, nor of its hospice, asylum or hospital. There are plans to restore the whole building to its former glory – hence the large number of "*Satılık*" ("For Sale") signs cropping up in anticipation of the area's "gentrification".

The **mosque**, which occupies the south church, is also in an advanced state of dilapidation, and it's difficult to believe that it was once an imperial

mausoleum. Among the surviving features are the revetments of the south apse and the original marble door frames. The floor, naturally, is covered in carpets but the *imam* may pull one of these back to give you a glimpse of the coloured marble underneath: an interlacing geometric pattern with figures of animals in its borders.

Just below the mosque to the east is the expensive *Zeyrekhane* **restaurant** (see p.199), housed in a monastery attached to the Church of the Pantocrator. The Rahmi Koç family, one of Turkey's wealthiest, set up the foundation that organized the restoration/conversion of the building and now run the restaurant.

### Eski İmaret Camii

Another attractive Byzantine church, the **Eski İmaret Camii**, is just a short (though rather convoluted) walk away. To get there, head northwest along İbadethane Arkası Sokak to Çirçir Caddesi, take a right onto Nevşehirli İbrahim Paşı Caddesi, and then a left into Hanedan Sokak – you'll see the church ahead of you. To get in, you'll need to arrive at prayer time or hope to find the *imam* at home (his house is connected to the mosque down a flight of stone steps).

Founded at the end of the twelfth century by Empress Anna Delessena, the mother of Alexius I Comnenus, this four-column structure is similar to the south Church of the Pantocrator, evidence of a return to traditional Byzantine forms, perhaps in reaction to the encroaching political threat from east and west. Eski İmaret has one of the most interesting exteriors of all the Byzantine churches in İstanbul. As ever, it's hemmed in by surrounding buildings, but in this case the wooden houses provide an attractive frame to the building. The roof and twelve-sided dome retain their original curved tiles, while the eaves are decorated with a zigzag of bricks. Other designs in the brickwork include swastikas and Greek keys. Inside, some of the original fittings remain, notably the red marble door frames and a floral decoration around the cornice supporting the dome. The two side apses also retain their original windows and marble cornice.

## Upper Fatih and Çarşamba

The reputation of **Fatih** ("the Conqueror") and **Çarşamba** as a conservative Islamic area is deserved, though they're not associated with intolerance towards visitors of different religious and cultural persuasions – it's still worth bearing in mind, however, that locals here may be more likely to take exception to naked limbs and (perhaps understandably) to having their picture taken without due warning than elsewhere in the city.

To get to Fatih and Çarşamba, simply follow the line of the Aqueduct of Valens from the north side of Atatürk Bulvarı and keep going when you run out of aqueduct. Or from Eminönü or Sultanahmet, take any bus going to Edirnekapı and get off at the Fatih Camii complex.

### Fatih Camii

**Fatih Camii**, the "Mosque of the Conqueror", on İslambol Caddesi, was begun ten years after the Conquest of İstanbul, in 1463, and completed in 1470. In 1766, however, it was almost completely destroyed in an earthquake: only the

courtyard, the entrance portal of the mosque, the south wall of the graveyard and the bases of the minarets survived; the rest was rebuilt. At the time of writing, it was again undergoing extensive renovation, with much of the interior off-limits and sections of the exterior scaffolded.

The **outer precinct** of the mosque is large enough to accommodate the tents of a caravan. It is enclosed by a wall and, to north and south, by the *medrese* (theological academy) buildings, which accommodated the first Ottoman university. The **inner courtyard** of the mosque is one of the most beautiful in the city. Verd-antique and porphyry columns support a domed portico with polychrome edges, while an eighteenth-century fountain is surrounded by four enormous poplar trees. Over the windows outside the courtyard in the west wall, the first verse of the Koran is inscribed in white marble on verd-antique. At either end of the mosque portico there are inscriptions in the early İznik *cuerda seca* technique, whereby coloured glazes were prevented from running into each other by a dividing line of potassium permanganate, which outlined the design. The inscription over the mosque portal records the date and dedication of the mosque, and the name of the architect, **Atık Sinan**. He was supposedly executed the year after its completion on the orders of Mehmet, because the dome wasn't as large as that of Aya Sofya.

The **interior**, painted in drab colours without a tile in sight, is rarely empty, even outside prayer times, acting as a social meeting place as well as a centre of serious Koranic study for both women and men. As in all mosques, the men occupy the main body of the building while the women's section is confined to the anterior regions, where you'll find an unusual old bronze water pump with silver cups.

The **tombs** of Mehmet II and of one of his wives, Gülbahar (Wed–Sun 9am–4.30pm; free), are situated to the east of the mosque. The originals were destroyed in the earthquake, and while Gülbahar's tomb is probably a replica of the original, the *türbe* of the Conqueror is sumptuous Baroque. **Çorba Kapısı**, the "Soup Gate", to the southeast of the mosque, is original, inlaid in porphyry and verd-antique.

## The Çarşamba Pazarı

The **Çarşamba Pazarı** or **Wednesday Market** (held, as the name implies, only on a Wed) is the largest in the city. Its origins are uncertain, but it seems likely it was first established here in the Byzantine period, when this area was still rural. Eventually, as the city grew and engulfed the district, an entire neighbourhood was named Çarşamba after the market. The bazaar stretches for block after block in the streets to the northwest, southwest and southeast of the Fatih Camii complex, its awning, strung up between the narrow streets, providing welcome shade. The goods on display here range from the usual cheap-and-cheerful household implements to fresh fruit and vegetables, and from cheap (and often even cheaper looking) clothing to bed linen and towels (rather better buys).

## Yavuz Selim Camii

Built on a terrace on the crest of one of İstanbul's seven hills (the fifth, counting from Topkapı's), **Yavuz Selim Camii** – also called the Selimiye Camii – holds a commanding position over the surrounding suburbs. The mosque of Yavuz Selim, or Selim the Grim, was probably begun in the reign of Selim and completed by Süleyman the Magnificent, but its dates are not certain. Close up,

the exterior is rather bleak, a fitting memorial to a man with such a reputation for cruelty. There's no pretty cascade of domes and turrets, just a large dome atop a square room with a walled courtyard in front of it. Once inside the courtyard walls, however, this simple, restrained building emerges as one of the most attractive of all the imperial mosques. A central fountain is surrounded by tall cypress trees, the floor of the portico is paved with a floral design, while its columns are a variety of marbles and granites.

The **domed rooms** to the north and south of the mosque – which served as hostels for travelling dervishes – are characteristic of early Ottoman architecture. In the mosque itself, under the sultan's loge (supported on columns in a variety of rare marbles) is paintwork in designs reminiscent of the delicacy of Turkish carpets or ceramics.

The **tomb of Selim the Grim** (daily except Tues 9.30am–4.30pm; free), beside the mosque, has lost its original interior decoration but retains two beautiful tiled panels on either side of the door. Other tombs in the complex include that of four of Süleyman's children, probably the work of Sinan. The views from the northeast of the complex, looking out over the Golden Horn, are glorious.

Viewed on the approach down Yavuz Selim Caddesi, the mosque presents one of the most impressive facades to be seen in the city, in part because of its position next to the **Cistern of Aspar**, one of three open cisterns built during the fifth and sixth centuries in Constantinople. For centuries, this space housed market gardens and a village, but these were cleared years ago and sections are now in use as an attractive park, as well as basketball and tennis courts. Tucked away to the west, on Ali Naki Sokak, is a recently restored covered cistern, now known as the **Sultan Sarnıçı**. Some 29m by 19m, it has the usual brick-vaulted ceiling supported by 28 columns, some marble, others granite, each topped with beautifully carved Corinthian capitals. Some of the capitals bear the initials, in Greek, of the craftsmen who carved them, whilst others sport crosses. The cistern now serves as a function room, so don't be surprised to find the columns decked out with frills if there's a wedding celebration in the offing. There's neither official opening times nor an admission charge, but assuming there is no function on you're free to wander round and explore.

## Fethiye Camii

A ten-minute walk northwest of the Cistern of Aspar following first Manyasizade, and then Fethiye Caddesi, is a major, but little visited, Byzantine gem – the **Fethiye Camii**, once the **Church of Theotokos Pammakaristos**. This medium-sized church, attractively set on a terrace overlooking the Golden Horn, was built in the twelfth century and conforms to the usual cross in a square design, its large central dome enhanced by four smaller, subsidiary domes. Despite the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453, it remained a Christian place of worship; indeed, between 1456 and 1587 it served as the seat of the **Greek Orthodox Patriarch** (now situated very nearby, in the district of Fener). It was finally converted into a mosque in 1573, when it was renamed the Fethiye Camii or "Mosque of the Conquest". The main body of the building continues to function as a mosque and is usually only unlocked around prayer times. The southwest wing (originally a side chapel or *parecclesion* of the main church, added in 1310) was partitioned off during restoration work undertaken in 1949 and now serves as a **museum** (daily except Wed 9am–4.30pm; 5TL). Helpful display boards in the entry to the chapel locate and give information on each of the mosaics, superb examples of the renaissance of Byzantine art, including, in the dome, Christ Pantocrator, encircled by the twelve prophets of the Old Testament.

## A multi-faith city

As late as the early years of the twentieth century, the Ottoman lands that would, in 1923, become the new Republic of Turkey, were home to a bewildering variety of **faiths** – Sunni Muslims, Alevis, Sufi and other "Islamic mystic" dervish orders, Jews, Yezidis, Greek, Syrian Orthodox and Armenian Apostolic Christians, Nestorian and Chaldean Christians, plus converts from all these "native" branches of the Christian faith to Catholicism and various forms of Protestantism. During World War I and the War of Independence, however, all this was to change. Most Christians in Anatolia, seen as collaborators and potential fifth columnists by the Turkish Nationalists, either fled or were deported. Non-Sunni Islam sects, also viewed with suspicion by the founders of the new, secular Turkish nation, were driven underground. Only in **İstanbul** did Christians remain in any numbers – over forty percent of the population – and despite the gradual emigration of most non-Muslims over the years since the formation of the Republic, Istanbul remains a multi-faith city.

In 1923, the **Greek Orthodox** population of the city was 100,000. It has now declined to some 3000, but the Orthodox Patriarchate is based in Fener (see p.110) and continues to serve the needs of the local Greek population, remaining, by tradition at least, the spiritual centre of the Eastern Orthodox Christian world. The **Armenian Apostolic Christians** have fared rather better, with a population of around 70,000. The community is spread across the city, though their religious focus is firmly in the Old City, at Kumkapı (see p.99), where the recently refurbished Patriarchate building stands opposite a nineteenth-century church that attracts a full congregation every Sunday (see p.100). The Ottoman Empire was very welcoming to Sephardic Jews fleeing persecution in Spain in the fifteenth century and the community also prospered. Around 20,000 **Jews** now live in the city, with their most notable synagogues being in Balat (see p.111) and across the Golden Horn in Galata.

Of course, today's İstanbul is largely populated by **Sunni Muslims**. As elsewhere in the İslamic world, orthodoxy is finding a new voice – as you will discover if you wander the streets of neighbourhoods such as Fatih. Many İstanbullus, however, wear their religion very lightly (or take no heed at all), and for the average devout male, it's enough to attend the midday prayers on a Friday in one of the city's beautiful mosques and enjoy his Sunday off with his family. The Muslim population of the city (and Turkey) is not as homogenous as you might think, however. By some estimates, around twenty percent are **Alevi** – a curious (to the outsider) and mystical mix of Islam, shamanism and Shiism. Whilst Sunni Islam is controlled by the state (religious officials such as *imams* are paid by the government, and sermons centrally checked), Alevis have led an "underground" existence beyond state sanction, worshipping in simple halls or private rooms known as *cemevi*. By tradition, they are staunch supporters of the secular regime (to avoid religious bigotry), even though they are neither recognized by, nor receive funding from, the state.

Other notable scenes show Christ with the Virgin Mary, the baptism of Christ and St John the Baptist.

# The Kariye Museum

Perched on a hill high above the old Jewish quarter of Balat and a stone's throw from the land walls of Theodosius, is the **Kariye Museum** (Kariye Müzesi; daily except Wed 9am–6pm; 15TL). Formerly the church of St Saviour in Chora, its interior is decorated with a superbly preserved series of **frescoes and mosaics**

portraying the life and miracles of Christ. This former church, among the most evocative of all the city's Byzantine treasures, is thought to have been built in the early twelfth century on the site of a much older church far from the centre: hence "in Chora", meaning "in the country". Between 1316 and 1321, the statesman and scholar Theodore Metochites rebuilt the central dome and added the narthexes and mortuary chapel.

You can break your sightseeing at the *Asithane* **restaurant** (see p.198) next door, one of the most atmospheric in the city.

To reach the museum from the city centre, take the light railway to the Ulubatlı stop and follow the road on the inside of the land walls heading northeast before turning right onto Kariye Camii Sokak, a street containing a number of picturesquely renovated wooden houses, painted in pastel colours. Alternatively, and dropping you closer to the museum at Edirnekapı, catch either the #28 or #38IE bus from Eminiönü.

## The narthexes

The mosaics and frescoes date from the same period as the renovations carried out by Metochites and depict the life of Christ in picture-book sequence. The first series to be followed is a set of dedicatory and devotional panels located in the two narthexes. Inside the church, the most prominent of the mosaics is that of **Christ Pantocrator**, bearing the inscription "Jesus Christ, the Land of the Living". Opposite this, above the entrance, is a depiction of the Virgin and angels, with the inscription "Mother of God, the Dwelling Place of the Uncontainable". The third in the series is located in the inner narthex and depicts Metochites offering a model of the building to a seated Christ. The hat he is wearing is called a *skiadon* (sunshade). Saints Peter and Paul are portrayed on either side of the door leading to the nave, and to the right of the door are Christ with his Mother and two benefactors, Isaac (who built the original church) and a female figure, described in the inscription as "Lady of the Mongols, Melane the Nun".

In the two domes of the inner narthex are medallions of Christ Pantocrator and the Virgin and Child, and in the fluting of the domes, a series of notable figures – starting with Adam – from the **Genealogy of Christ**. The **Cycle of the Blessed Virgin** is located in the first three bays of the inner narthex. These mosaics are based on the apocryphal gospel of St James, which gives an account of the birth and life of the Virgin and was very popular in the Middle Ages. Episodes depicted here include the first seven steps of the Virgin (taken when she was 6 months old); the Virgin caressed by her parents, with two beautiful peacocks in the background; the Virgin presented as an attendant at the temple (where she remained from the age of 3 to 12); the Virgin receiving a skein of purple wool, as proof of her royal blood; Joseph taking the Virgin to his house, in which is also depicted one of Joseph's sons by his first wife; and Joseph returning from a six-month business trip to find his wife pregnant.

The next cycle, to be found in the lunettes of the outer narthex, is that of the **Infancy of Christ**. The mosaics can be followed clockwise, starting with Joseph dreaming, the Virgin and two companions, and the journey to Bethlehem. Apart from well-known scenes such as the Journey of the Magi and the Nativity, there are depictions in the seventh bay (furthest right from the main entrance) of the Flight into Egypt, which includes the apocryphal Fall of Idols (white and ghostly-looking figures) from the walls of an Egyptian town as the holy family passes by. In the sixth bay is the Slaughter of the Innocents, complete with babies impaled on spikes.

The **Cycle of Christ's Ministry** fills the vaults of the outer narthex and parts of the south bay of the inner narthex. It includes wonderful scenes of the

Temptation of Christ, with dramatic dialogue (Matthew 4: 3–10) that could almost be in speech bubbles, beginning:

**Devil: If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.**

**Christ: It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.**



### The nave and funerary chapel

In the **nave**, the main frescoes echo the mosaics, featuring the death of the Virgin, over the door and, to the right of this, another depiction of Christ. The best known of all the works in the church, however, are the **frescoes in the funerary chapel** (known as the *parecclesion*) to the south of the nave. The most spectacular is the **Resurrection**, also known as the Harrowing of Hell. This is a dramatic representation of Christ in action, trampling the gates of Hell underfoot and forcibly dragging Adam and Eve from their tombs. A black Satan lies among the broken fetters at his feet, bound at the ankles, wrists and neck, but still writhing around in a vital manner. To the left of the painting, animated onlookers include John the Baptist, David and Solomon, while to the right Abel is standing in his mother's tomb; behind him is another group of the righteous.

Other frescoes in the chapel, in the vault of the east bay, depict the **Second Coming**. In the east half of the domical vault Christ sits in judgement, saying to the souls of the saved, on his right, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." To the condemned souls on the left he says, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Below, a river of fire broadens into a lake in which are the souls of the damned. Their torments are illustrated in the lunette of the south wall and comprise the Gnashing of Teeth, the Outer Darkness, the Worm that Sleepeth Not and the Unquenchable Fire.

The tomb in the north wall of the *parecclesion* has lost its inscription, but is almost certainly the **tomb of Metochites**, the donor of the church.

# Along the Golden Horn

Most of the sights on this side of the Golden Horn lie more or less on the line of the old sea walls, which once ran right around the peninsula and linked into either end of the great land walls of Theodosius – and thus completely encircled and protected first the Byzantine and then the Ottoman imperial capitals.

The best starting point is the **Atatürk Bridge (Unkapanı Köprüsü)**, accessible by any Fatih-bound bus from Eminönü. As you head northwest along the bank of the Horn, the narrow streets and jumbled houses of Fatih, Fener and Balat tumble down from the hills above, and traffic roars past on busy Ayvansaray Caddesi. Warm Sundays bring droves of picnicking families to the strip of park between the road and waterfront.

## The Çıbali Gate to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate

Not far beyond the **Kadir Has University**, housed in an imposing late nineteenth-century former tobacco factory, the **Çibali Kapısı** (Old Gateway) pierces a surviving section of the old sea walls. Here, on May 29, 1453, the

besieging Ottoman forces breached the Byzantine defences, a success that led to the Muslim conquest of the imperial capital on that very same day. A little further along Abdülezel Caddesi, in a walled compound right next to the road, is the Greek Orthodox church of **Aya Nikola**. Although the current building dates from the mid-nineteenth century, it has a much longer history and was once a dependency of a monastery on Mount Athos, situated in what is now northern Greece. You'll need to ring the bell to gain entry. An Orthodox family live here and tend the building, which has a sacred spring, or *ayazma*, in the narthex. The interior of the church manages to be both garish and gloomy, but the iconstasis, in the form of the facade of a classical-era Greek temple, is interesting.

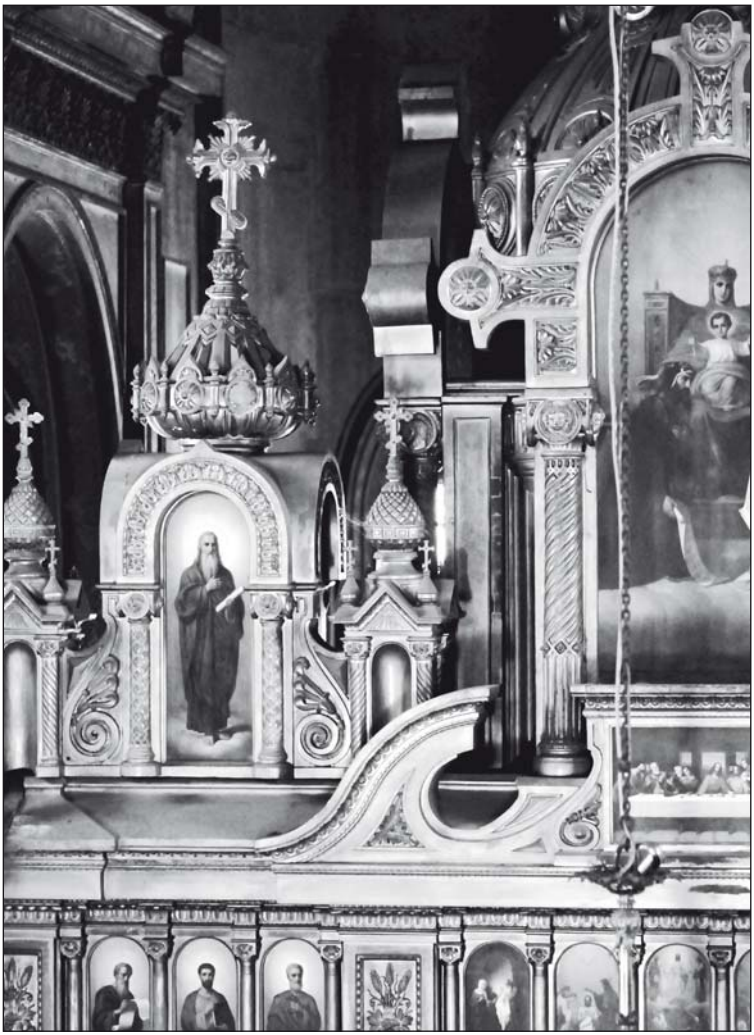
A couple of blocks inland, on Gül Camii Sokak, is the **Gül Camii**, once the Byzantine **Church of St Theodosia**, thought to have been built in the twelfth century. Reached by a flight of steps from the street below, it is a most attractive and well-preserved structure. Typical of the Byzantine style, it is made largely of courses of slim red bricks, alternating with narrower bands of pale limestone. More or less square in plan, it is topped with an elegant dome. The church was converted into a mosque soon after the Conquest, and its name, "Rose Mosque" in Turkish, is said to derive from the fact that when the Ottoman forces entered the church on May 29, it was still festooned with the roses put there by the Christians to mark the feast of St Theodosia that same day.

The **Greek Orthodox Patriarchate** (daily 9am–5pm; free), known in Turkish as the Fener Rum Patrikhanesis, is approached by continuing northwest along Abdülezel Caddesi for around half a kilometre, then forking left and following Mursel Paşa Caddesi for a short way. It has been the spiritual centre of the Orthodox world since 1599 and remains so today – despite the fact that the Greek Orthodox community in the city is now so meagre and that a Turkish court controversially ruled in 2007 that the spiritual authority of Patriarch Bartholomew I was confined solely to Turkey's few remaining Greek Orthodox Christians, rather than to the Orthodox Christian community worldwide. This appears to have little effect on the coachloads of tourists from Athens and elsewhere in Greece, who flock to the nineteenth-century **Church of St George** (which stands in the compound of the Patriarchate) on Sunday mornings in the tourist season – especially for the Easter Sunday Mass. St George's is attractive enough – and watching the Orthodox pilgrims pay their respects is moving – but the church is architecturally undistinguished.

## Kanlı Kilisesi to Surp Hreşdagabet

The thirteenth-century **Church of St Mary of the Mongols** (in Greek, the Panaghia Mouchliotissa) is known in Turkish as the **Kanlı Kilisesi** or "Bloody Church". It's difficult to find in the backstreets above and behind the Patriarchate. The best landmark is the monumental red-brick Victorian Gothic-style **Fener Greek School for Boys**. Keep this to your left as you ascend the hill via the stepped street of Tevki Medivenli Sokak until you reach the church, which is on Tevki Cafer Mektebi Sokak. Rendered and painted an uninspiring red, this is the only Byzantine church in the city where Orthodox services have been carried out from before the Muslim conquest to the present day. You'll need to ring the bell to gain admittance – most interesting on a Sunday when services are still held here, though your arrival may well double the congregation.

Further to the northwest, the curious, neo-Gothic white-painted church, stranded on a massive traffic-island-cum-park area, is **St Stephen of the Bulgars**. Built in 1896, it is made entirely from iron, cast in Vienna and carted



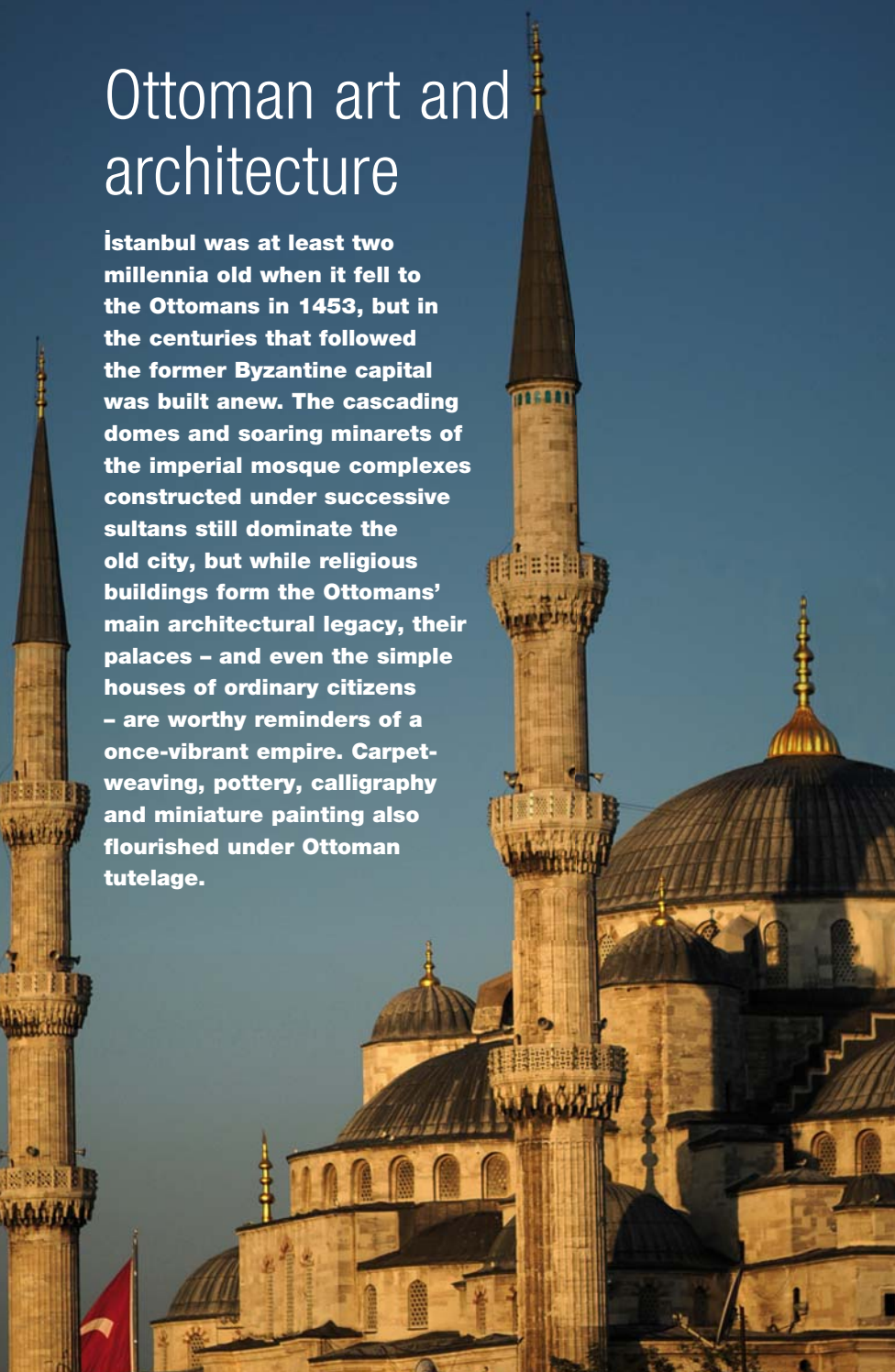
▲ St Stephen of the Bulgars

all the way to İstanbul. That the Bulgarian branch of the Orthodox Church had the temerity to erect their church so close to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate shows just how much rivalry there was between ethnic Bulgarians and Greeks in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – a rivalry that was to lead to much bloodshed in the eastern Balkans.

Further north is the old Jewish quarter of Balat. Sephardic Jews, expelled from Spain, were given sanctuary in the Muslim Ottoman Empire from 1492, and many naturally gravitated towards İstanbul – with large numbers ending up in Balat. The **Ahrida Synagogue**, tucked inconspicuously away on narrow Kürkçu Çeşme Sokak in the backstreets behind the waterfront here, receives a

remarkable number of visitors despite its out-of-the-way location and the fact that visits must be arranged the day before (contact the Chief Rabbinate on ☎0212/243 5166). Dating from the fifteenth century, it was rebuilt in the Ottoman Baroque style in 1694 following a fire. The deceptively large interior can hold a congregation of 350, and its curved *tevah* (pulpit) is said to represent Noah's Ark. Just along from the synagogue yet another faith is represented, this time the Armenian Apostolic Christians. The massive stone walls of the compound of **Surp Hreşdagabet (Church of the Holy Archangels)** are marred with graffiti and the chances of gaining admittance are slim – the Armenian family caretakers are suspicious of strangers and the heavy iron doors lack either a knocker or a bell (try on Thur morning when there is a service). It was built as a Greek Orthodox church in the thirteenth century but was later given to the local Armenian community following the conversion of their original church in Fatih into a mosque in 1627. The church's chief claim to fame today is the supposedly curative properties of its *ayzma* (holy spring) and the curious rite held every September 16, when chickens and sheep are sacrificed and the meat distributed to the needy.

# Ottoman art and architecture



**İstanbul was at least two millennia old when it fell to the Ottomans in 1453, but in the centuries that followed the former Byzantine capital was built anew. The cascading domes and soaring minarets of the imperial mosque complexes constructed under successive sultans still dominate the old city, but while religious buildings form the Ottomans' main architectural legacy, their palaces – and even the simple houses of ordinary citizens – are worthy reminders of a once-vibrant empire. Carpet-weaving, pottery, calligraphy and miniature painting also flourished under Ottoman tutelage.**

View across the Süleymaniye külliye ▲

The Selimiye Camii's central dome ▼

Blue Mosque interior ▼

Ritual ablutions at a şadırvan ▼

## Religious architecture

The Ottoman Empire was Islamic, and İstanbul's imperial **mosques** and associated structures, known collectively as *külliye*, were given lavish treatment. The complexes usually included a *medrese* (school), a *hamam*, an *imaret* (soup kitchen), a hospital, accommodation for travellers and a cemetery. The ultimate *külliye*, magnificently positioned on the crest of İstanbul's third hill, is the **Süleymaniye** (see p.95), whose buildings are arranged with almost geometric precision around the mosque itself. Its architect, the incomparable Sinan (see box, p.95) is buried within its grounds. His finest achievement, however, is Edirne's **Selimiye Camii** (see p.302), where the mighty dome, cleverly supported by eight unobtrusive pillars, seems to float over the worshippers below.

## Mosque features

Most mosques have at least one **minaret** (İstanbul's Blue Mosque boasts six), from whose balconies pre-loudspeaker muezzins called believers to prayer. Their origin is ascribed variously to the fire watchtowers of pre-Islamic cities and early Christian ascetics, the Stylites, who dwelt atop pillars to bring them closer to God. While early Arab mosques derived from the simple, flat-roofed courtyard house of the prophet Mohammad, the later Ottoman style was based around domes and slender, cylindrical minarets.

Most mosques have a **courtyard** centred round the *şadırvan* or ritual-ablutions fountain, which worshippers use before prayer. A multi-domed **portico** on the northwest side of the mosque provides an "overspill" prayer area for busy times. Inside, the focus is the southeast, Mecca-facing **kibba** wall, punctured by a

**mihrab** or prayer niche. Right of this is a **pulpit**, from which the *imam* leads Friday prayers. As Islam forbids representation of the human form, Ottoman mosque interiors are enlivened by stylized geometric patterns and Arabic calligraphy.

## Secular buildings

The city's fifteenth-century conqueror, Sultan Mehmet II, found its palaces already in ruins. Within five years a new palace, the **Topkapı** (see p.57), rose on the splendid promontory overlooking the Bosphorus and Sea of Marmara. Following Islamic precepts, originating in the tented camps of nomadic warriors, Topkapı was a collection of low buildings set around a series of courtyards and gardens. The **Dolmabahçe Palace** (see p.147), built in 1853, was inspired by European royal dwellings such as Versailles, and revels in its ostentatiousness and gorgeous waterfront setting. By contrast, ordinary Ottoman citizens lived in humble wood and lath and plaster houses, crammed along narrow, atmospheric streets, their *cumbas* (projecting upper floors) often just a couple of metres from the home opposite. The best places to see these homes are around Cankurtaran, Kumkapı and the northwest quarter.

## Carpets and pottery

Whether providing comfort for the prostrated faithful or adding opulence to palaces or the *konak* (mansion) of a wealthy merchant, Ottoman-era Turkish **carpets** are real works of art. The best place to see examples – without getting smooth-talked in the Grand Bazaar – is the İbrahim Paşa Sarayı (see p.73).

The fourteenth-century arrival of blue and white Chinese porcelain inspired

▲ The Topkapı Palace

▼ The Dolmabahçe Palace

▼ Ottoman carpet, Sokullo Mehmet Paşa Camii

İznik tilework, Rustem Paşa Camii ▲

Calligraphy in Aya Sofya ▼

Ottoman-era miniature ▼

Ottoman **potters**. The very best wares were produced in pretty, lakeside İznik (see p.259), with the form reaching its apogee in the late sixteenth century, when craftsmen added a rich, tomato-red raised relief to a palette that already included blue, turquoise, magenta, green and grey – best seen in the sumptuously tiled interior of the Rustem Paşa Camii (see p.87).

## Calligraphy

Arabic is the language of the Koran, and to Muslims **calligraphy** is the highest art form as it represents the word of God – you'll see quotations from the Koran and the *hadiths* (sayings of the prophet) adorning the interior of any İstanbul mosque. The Ottomans also produced exquisite manuscript Korans, prayer books, framed artworks (*levha*) and decorative books of calligraphic exercises, not to mention the sultan's delightfully ornate imperial monogram, all visible at the Sakip Sabancı Museum (see p.165).

## Miniatures

**Miniature paintings** were as much a part of illuminated Ottoman manuscripts as calligraphy, and a painting academy was established in the Topkapı Palace as early as the fifteenth century. As Ottoman power increased, so did the standard of the paintings, especially following the arrival of artists from Persia, Mesopotamia and Central Asia. Islamic convention was frequently ignored, with human figures, often the sultans themselves, figuring prominently, along with scenes from court ceremonies, legends and historical events such as the 1588 Siege of Vienna. Good examples can be see at the İbrahim Paşa Sarayı (see p.73) and the Sakip Sabancı Museum (see p.165).

# 5

# The land walls

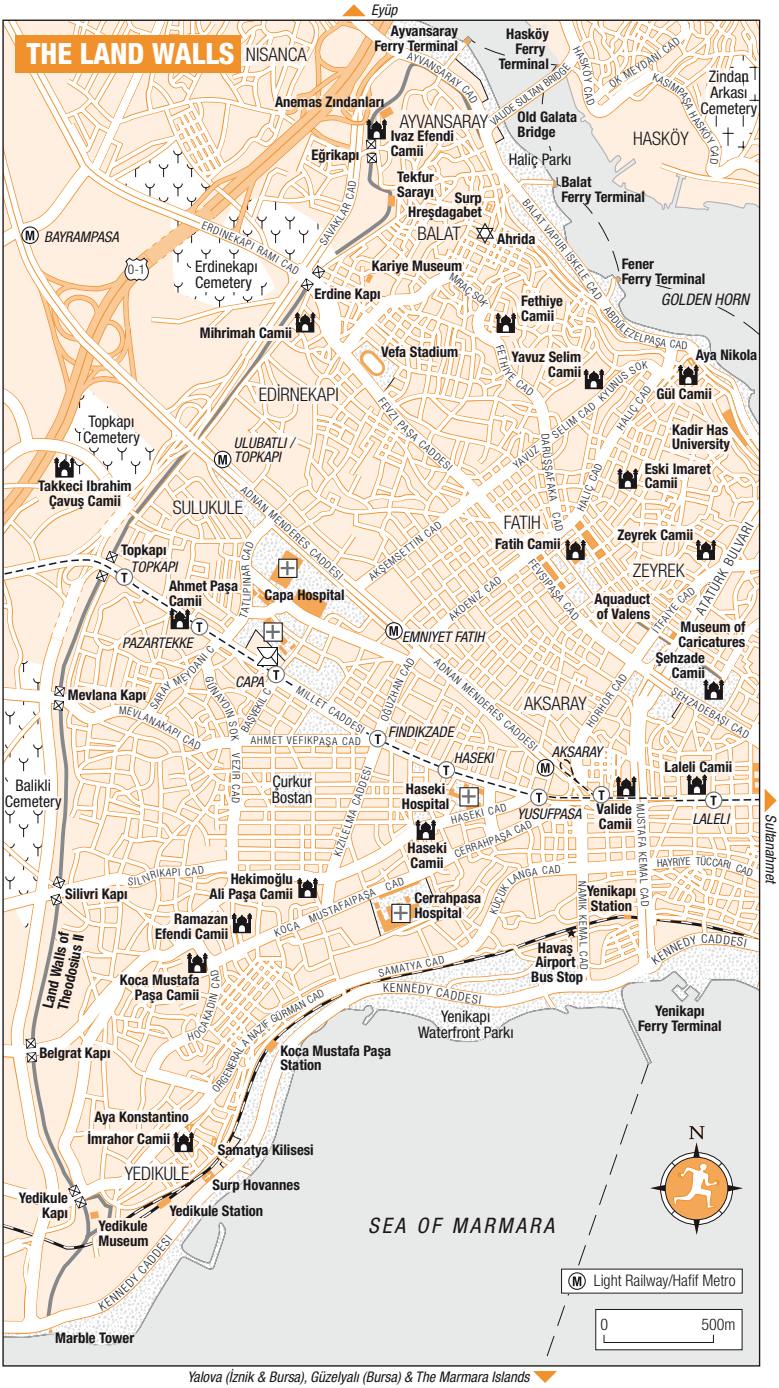


The **land walls** of Theodosius II are among the most fascinating Byzantine remains to be found in Turkey. Well-preserved remnants still exist along the whole of their six-and-a-half-kilometre length, despite the 1999 earthquake, which caused several unrestored portions to collapse. Sadly, the ongoing renovation process gives barely a nod to historical accuracy: some sections have been completely rebuilt in newly dressed stone and cement bricks, while certain additional details, such as medieval-style flourishes, quite possibly never existed.

The walls were named after **Theodosius II**, even though he was only 12 years old when their construction was started in 413 AD. The walls – stretching from the Sea of Marmara to Tekfur Sarayı, 2km further out than the previous walls of Constantine – were planned by Anthemius, Prefect of the East, to accommodate the city's expanding population. Along with the sea walls, which they join to the north above the Golden Horn at the Tekfur Sarayı and to the south on the shore of the Sea of Marmara, they formed a near impregnable defence for the city. The land walls were almost completely destroyed by an earthquake in 447 and had to be rebuilt in haste, since Attila's forces were on the point of attack. An ancient edict was brought into effect whereby all citizens, regardless of rank, were required to help in the rebuilding. The Hippodrome factions of Blues and Greens (see box, p.71) provided 16,000 labourers and finished the project in just two months. The completed construction consisted of the original wall, 5m thick and 12m high, plus an outer wall of 2m by 8.5m, and a twenty-metre-wide moat – sufficient enough to repel Attila's Huns, who numbered several thousand but did not have the skill or patience for siege warfare.

A walk along the walls can take as little as two hours, though a full day will allow time to fully enjoy them and the adjacent sites. Most of the outer wall and its 96 towers are still standing; access is restricted on some of the restored sections, though elsewhere there's the chance to scramble along the crumbling edifice. The stone used is limestone, and the bricks were sometimes stamped with the name of the manufacturer or donor and bear the name of the emperor in whose reign they were made. Mortar mixed with brick dust was used liberally to bind the masonry; the towers had two levels, separated by brick barrel-vaults.

There are still plenty of run-down **slum dwellings** along the city walls, the worst of which are in Topkapı, a dangerous area after dark. However, it's highly unlikely you'll encounter any problems in daytime. If time is limited, the two best **sites** to visit are the Yedikule fortifications and the Mihrimah Camii, a mosque designed by Mimar Sinan. The Kariye Museum, a former Byzantine church containing some of the best-preserved mosaics and frescoes in the world, which lies close to the walls, is described on p.107.


THE LAND WALLS
Eyüp
Otogar Bus Terminal
Zoodochos Pege & Cemeteries
Sultanahmet
NISANCA
Ayvansaray Ferry Terminal
Hasköy Ferry Terminal
Anemas Zindanları
AYVANSARAY
Ivaz Efendi Camii
Old Galata Bridge
HASKÖY
Zindan Arkası Cemetery
Eğrikapı
Haliç Parkı
Tekfur Sarayı
Balat Ferry Terminal
Surp Hreşdagabet
BALAT
Ahrida
BAYRAMPASA
Erdinekapı Cemetery
Kariye Museum
Erdine Kapı
Fener Ferry Terminal
GOLDEN HORN
Fethiye Camii
Mihrimah Camii
Vefa Stadium
Yavuz Selim Camii
Aya Nikola
Gül Camii
EDİRNEKAPI
Topkapı Cemetery
ULUBATLI / TOPKAPI
Kadir Has University
Takkeci Ibrahim Çavuş Camii
SULUKULE
Eski Imareti Camii
FATIH
Zeyrek Camii
Topkapı
TOPKAPI
Fatih Camii
ZEYREK
Ahmet Paşa Camii
Capa Hospital
Aquaduct of Valens
Museum of Caricatures
PAZARTEKKE
EMNIYET FATIH
Şehzade Camii
CAPA
Mevlana Kapı
AKSARAY
FINDIKZADE
HASEKI
AKSARAY
Laleli Camii
Balikli Cemetery
Çurkur Bostan
Haseki Hospital
Valide Camii
YUSUFPASA
LALELI
Haseki Camii
Silivri Kapı
Hekimoğlu Ali Paşa Camii
Cerrahpasa Hospital
Yenikapı Station
Ramazan Efendi Camii
Havaş Airport Bus Stop
Land Walls of Theodosius II
Koca Mustafa Paşa Camii
KENNEDY CADDESI
Yenikapı Waterfront Parkı
Yenikapı Ferry Terminal
Belgrat Kapı
Koca Mustafa Paşa Station
Aya Konstantino
İmrahor Camii
Samatya Kilisesi
YEDIKULE
Surp Hovannes
Yedikule Kapı
Yedikule Station
Yedikule Museum
SEA OF MARMARA
N
Light Railway/Hafif Metro
0
500m
Marble Tower
Yalova (İznik & Bursa), Güzelyalı (Bursa) & The Marmara Islands

**Buses** from Eminönü or Sultanahmet include the #80 to Yedikule, #84 to Topkapı and #28 and #38IE to Edirnekapı, or you can catch the tram to Topkapı or the light railway to Ulubatlı. To reach the north end of the walls, take the ferry from Eminönü to Ayvansaray İskelesi on the Golden Horn, just before the Haliç bridge. The best way to reach the southern end is to take a local (*banliyo*) **train** from Sirkeci or Cankurtan to Yedikule on the Marmara shore.



# Yedikule and around

At the southern end of the walls, **Yedikule**, around 5km from Sultanahmet, is an attractive if run-down quarter. As a centre of Rum Orthodoxy, it is packed with churches – the dwindling congregations of such churches, scattered throughout İstanbul, are the last remaining descendants of the Byzantine Greeks. When you leave the train station, on Yedikule İstasyon Caddesi, head away from the sea along Halit Efendi Sokak and you reach İmrahor İlyas Bey Caddesi, Yedikule's main street. Here you'll find a concentration of quaint, Greek-influenced houses and some pretty churches.

The name Yedikule ("seven-tower") refers to the fortifications in this area, namely the triumphal arch of the Golden Gate – constructed here by Theodosius I in 390, even before the walls themselves – and the towers and walls later added by Mehmet the Conqueror.

## İmrahor Camii

The only ancient building of any note in the vicinity of Yedikule is the ruined **İmrahor Camii** (Tues–Sun 9am–noon & 1.30–5pm; 3TL), the former Church of St John of Studius, at İmam Aşır Sokak, off İmrahor İlyas Bey Caddesi. To get there, walk straight up Halit Efendi Sokak from the train station and you'll see the remains on your right. Whatever anyone may suggest to the contrary, there is no entrance fee. Indeed, the biggest problem is gaining access at all, as the compound gate is locked and the caretaker not always around.

The church, built in 463, was connected to a monastery of the *akoimetai* or "unsleeping", whose inhabitants prayed in relay around the clock. The monks lived according to the strict rules of St Basil: even melancholy was considered a sin, and the monks were required to keep before them the spectre of death by repeating the words "We shall die!" over and over. They still found time, however, to transcribe books for mass circulation, and monks even came from Russia to learn the trade. The monastery gained particular renown under the auspices of **Abbot Theodore**, an outspoken defender of images and critic of the Byzantine court, who established it as the centre of a renaissance in Byzantine scholarship. Although he died in exile on the Princes' Islands, the reputation of the institution survived him and the monastery was home to the University of Constantinople during the first half of the fifteenth century. Its greatest claim to historical fame, however, came in 1042, when the tyrant **Michael V** took refuge here from a popular revolution. He made his way to the church by ship, but was discovered, dragged from the altar and blinded.

As you approach the **church entrance**, you'll see four large columns with acanthus capitals, supporting a horizontal carved entablature. This is the entrance to the narthex and the east wall of the atrium, which was square and probably colonnaded. The interior of the church was a simple, almost square basilica. The

aisles were partitioned off by rows of columns, six of which have survived; these, too, are capped with acanthus capitals and support a horizontal entablature. The interlace floor is twelfth-century, but what remains of the original fittings suggests that the church was sumptuously decorated, in contrast to its simple structure.



## Aya Konstantino, Samatya Kilisesi and Surp Hovannes

These three churches of Aya Konstantino, Samatya Kilisesi and Surp Hovannes are not of great historical importance or architectural merit, but they are examples of how ancient forms of Christianity have endured, despite the vicissitudes of time, in this once über-cosmopolitan city. By far the best time to visit any of them is on a Sunday morning, when a service is in progress; otherwise, they are almost certain to be locked, and tracking down the family caretakers is not always easy.

The largest is the Greek Orthodox church of **Aya Konstantino** (St Constantine), a minute's walk north of the İmarhor Camii, on İmrahor İlyas Bey Caddesi. Built in 1754 (though possibly rebuilt a century or so later), this big, apricot-coloured church boasts an impressive bell tower adjacent to the church itself and has some striking relief panels from an earlier era set in the walls. Inside, the huge central nave is divided from the side aisles by twin rows of Neoclassical columns. A relic in the form of the arm of the Emperor Constantine is believed to be hidden somewhere in the church.

A couple of minutes south of the Aya Konstantino is the Syrian Orthodox **Samatya Kilisesi** (Church of Samatya). Originally, this nineteenth-century church was Italian Catholic, but after many years of disuse it was taken over (in the 1980s) by followers of the ancient, monophysite Syrian Orthodox faith. They emigrated in numbers to İstanbul from their original homeland in the southeast of the country after being caught in the regional crossfire between the Kurdish PKK (Kurdish Workers party) and the Turkish security forces in the 1990s.

Another ancient Christian group (also monophysite), the Armenian Apostolics, are represented here by the church of **Surp Hovhannes** (St Joseph's), a short way south of the Samatya Kilisesi, tucked beneath a stretch of surviving sea wall by the Narlı Kapisi (Pomegranate Gate). The Armenian presence in the city dates back to the early years of the Ottoman conquest, when they were brought here from their original homeland in eastern Anatolia and the southern Caucasus to help in the reconstruction and running of the city. The barn-like interior is painted blue and white, and altar area a mass of gilt. The number of priests present at the Sunday morning service often outnumbers the drastically diminished congregation, as most of the city's Armenian population now live in more distant suburbs.

## The Yedikule Museum

The most impressive sections of wall have been designated the **Yedikule Müzesi** (Yedikule Museum: daily except Mon 9am–6pm; 5TL), situated to the southwest of the İmrahor Camii on Yedikule Meydanı Sokak, off Yedikule Caddesi. Follow Kuyulu Bakkal Sokak (or, from the station, Yedikule İstasyon Caddesi) straight to the entrance.

The so-called **Golden Gate**, flanked by two marble towers, stood alone – a triumphal arch in the path of important visitors of state and of conquering emperors (generals were never permitted to pass through the gate, even after successful campaigns). The shape of the three arches is still visible on both sides

of the wall, but it takes a degree of imagination to invest the structure with the glamour and dignity it must once have possessed. Michael Palaeologus was the last emperor to ride through in triumph, when the city was recaptured from occupying Crusaders. After the empire went into decline, the gold-plated doors were removed and the entrance bricked up.

The other five towers of the Yedikule fortifications were added by Mehmet the Conqueror, and with their twelve-metre-high curtain walls they form the enclave that can be seen today. Despite its design, this was never actually used as a castle, but two of the towers served as prisons and others were used as treasuries and offices for the collection of revenue of the *Vakıf* or pious foundation. The two **prison towers** are those immediately to the left of the entrance. The inscriptions around the outside of the first of these were carved into the walls by prisoners, many of them foreign ambassadors on some hapless errand. The prison in the second tower doubled as an execution chamber: the wooden gallows and "well of blood", into which heads would roll, are still to be seen, and the odd instrument of torture can be found lying about outside in the courtyard. The most famous victim of the execution chamber was Osman II, deposed and murdered in 1622 by his janissaries, and thus providing Ottoman history with its first case of regicide.

It's worth spending some time climbing around the battlements with the lizards. You can look across to the Marble Tower, where the sea and land walls meet beyond the railway line on the Marmara coast, and also see a good stretch of the walls to the north.

## Yedikule Kapı to Mevlana Kapı

North along the walls, the first of the public gateways is the **Yedikule Kapı**. This is still in use: traffic wardens compete to direct traffic through the narrow entry, with its Byzantine eagle cut in the blackened marble overhead. The land in and around this first section from Yedikule Kapı to Belgrat Kapı is given over to market gardens, and access is difficult because of fences, deep ditches and so forth. **Belgrat Kapı** was a military gate, different from a public gateway in that there was no bridge crossing the moat beyond the outer walls. It was named for the captives who were settled in this area by Süleyman the Magnificent after his capture of Belgrade in 1521. The walls here, which are floodlit at night, have been substantially renovated and it's now one of the best places to walk along the parapet – though the area inside the walls is very run-down and vagrants sleep on some of the waste ground. North from Belgrat Kapı to Silivri Kapı, the walls are largely untouched, though the sections around **Silivri Kapı** itself have been extensively renovated. This gate was known to the Byzantines as Pege because of its proximity to a famous shrine, the Zoodochos Pege.

There is more restoration work at the **Mevlana Kapı**, and also some interesting inscriptions on the outer wall. The Theodosian walls reached completion at this gate, since it was here that the Greens, building from the Marmara, met the Blues, who were working southwards from the direction of the Golden Horn. A Latin inscription to the left of the gate celebrates this fact: "By the command of Theodosius, Constantine erected these strong fortifications in less than two months. Scarcely could Pallas [Athena] herself have built so strong a citadel in so short a time."

### Zoodochos Pege

Known to the Turks as the Balıklı Kilise (Church with Fish), the shrine/church complex of **Zoodochos Pege** (daily 9am–4pm) lies some 400m west of the

Silivri Kapı, in the midst of a sea of cemeteries. It's one of the greenest spots in urban İstanbul and an oasis of peace and quiet. The well-kept shrine and church are set in a walled compound, dominated by a giant plane tree. The shrine dates back to the early Byzantine era, but the current church only to 1833. The marble iconstasis resembles the facade of a classical temple, and the gloomy interior has maintained a certain sanctity. The focus, though, is very much on the *ayazma* (sacred spring) reached by steps leading down from the right of the church entrance. Fish swim lazily a floodlit pool, and the row of taps above the basin, where pilgrims take the "holy" waters, are in the shape of crosses. According to legend, a hungry monk was frying some fish when he heard that Constantinople had fallen to the Turks. The disbelieving monk apparently said that was about as likely as the fish in his pan coming back to life, with which they leapt out of the pan and into the pool, where their descendants remain to this day. Visit on a Sunday, and the surrounding Muslim, Armenian and Greek Orthodox cemeteries – beautifully green and well tended – are crowded with people paying their respects to the departed.

# Topkapı

A road system dominates the outer side of the Mevlanakapı to Topkapı section of wall, and a pleasant stretch of pavement has been constructed along the moat, but again it's difficult to walk along the walls themselves here. Just south of Topkapı, the walls have been destroyed to make way for the enormous thoroughfare of Millet Caddesi, which you'll have to cross – it's not easy, with the tramway running in the middle of a busy dual carriageway, so use the pedestrian crossing a little to the east. Once over it, continue inside the walls until you reach Kaleiçi and the **Topkapı** ("Gate of the Cannonball"), named after the most powerful cannon of Mehmet the Conqueror, some of whose enormous stone cannonballs have been placed around the inside of the gate. To get here by public transport, take a tram from Sirkeci, Sultanahmet or Aksaray.

At Kaleiçi, you can get a decent meal at any of the *lokantas* and *pide* (kebab salons) on Topkapı Caddesi. At the southeastern end of this street, on the left, is the **Ahmet Paşa Camii**, a Sinan mosque dating from 1554. In the porch, there are original tiles made in the *cuerda seca* technique and, despite some heavy-handed renovation, it's worth having a look inside at the original arabesque painting under the galleries. Another delightful mosque lies back outside the walls on Topkapı-Davutpaşa Caddesi (south off Davutpaşa Caddesi). The wooden **Takkeci İbrahim Çavuş Camii** (open for prayers only) retains much that is original, including its wooden dome and some fine tile panels from the best İznik period. The mosque was founded in 1592 by the eponymous *takkeci*, a maker of the distinctive felt hats (*takke*) worn by dervishes. The income of an artisan could not have been equal to the cost of building a mosque, however modest, and around this fact, no doubt, has grown the myth of its origins. It is said that the hatmaker was told in a dream to go to Baghdad, where he would find a great treasure buried under a vine tree in the garden of an inn. He duly set off on his donkey and, arriving at the place of his dream, began to dig under said vine. The innkeeper came out and enquired his business, admonished him and advised him to return to the place from where he had started his journey. On arriving back in Topkapı, the *takkeci* found two bags of gold on the present site of the mosque. Burying one

in the ground, he used the other to finance the building of his mosque, the idea being that if this mosque were destroyed then another could be built in its place with the buried gold. The *imam* who tells this story to visitors points out a panel of faïence tiles depicting plump red grapes hanging on vines, jokingly suggesting that these are corroborative evidence of his story. And in such a poor parish, who can blame him for clinging to the fond hope that sufficient funds are buried beneath the wooden mosque to finance its rebuilding should the need arise?



## Sulukule to the Golden Horn

Between Topkapı and Edirnekapı, there's a pronounced valley, formerly the route of the Lycus River, now taken by Adnan Menderes (Vatan) Caddesi. This road is also difficult to cross – use the subway marked by the metro sign a little to the east of the line of the wall. At this point, the walls are at their least defensible, since the higher ground outside gives the advantage to attackers. The famed **Orban cannon** of Mehmet the Conqueror was trained on this part of the walls during the siege of 1453, hence their ruinous state. It was here, too, that Constantine XI rode into the midst of the Turkish army after he realized that all hope of holding out was gone. Today, **Sulukule** – the area inside the walls between Adnan Menderes Caddesi and Edirnekapı – is in a ruinous state for very different reasons. Home to a gypsy community for close on a thousands years, many of its traditional houses have already been bulldozed by the local municipality to make way for more upmarket residences – though a 2008 UNESCO report criticizing the area's makeover may halt further destruction.

**Edirnekapı**, a small-time suburb with a large *otogar* for local buses, and its gate take their name from the route to modern Edirne, which passed through even in Byzantine times. The wall around here has been well restored and you can explore the battlements and admire the views over the Old City and the Golden Horn. Also left over from the Byzantine era is the smallest of the ancient city's open **cisterns**, located about 50m from the *otogar* on the left of Fevzi Paşa Caddesi (Edirnekapı's main street), below the level of the road. It's now the site of the Vefa football stadium, but the original dimensions of the cistern can still be seen.

A little to the left of the *otogar* as you face the walls is the **Mihrimah Camii**, one of many early Sinan works commissioned by Mihrimah, the favourite daughter of Süleyman the Magnificent, and her husband Rüstem Paşa. The mosque, situated on the highest of İstanbul's seven hills, dates from somewhere around the middle of the sixteenth century. It's raised on a platform and can be seen from all over the city, with the area beneath occupied by shops. The mosque and its dependencies have suffered in two earthquakes, the second of which brought the minaret tumbling down onto the mosque itself. During renovation, the interior was filled with twentieth-century arabesque stencilling, though other aspects compensate, especially the light flooding in through the windows and the graceful white-marble *mimber*. Note, too, the skilful fake marbling of the arches under the eastern gallery.

Continuing north along the inner side of the walls soon brings you to the **Tekfur Sarayı** or Palace of the Porphyrogenitus, which was undergoing extensive renovation at the time of writing. Built in the thirteenth or fourteenth

centuries, this was a residence of the Byzantine royal family (possibly an annexe of the larger, but virtually vanished Blachernae Palace). It has a fine facade, with contrasting bands of red brick and pale stone, pierced by arched windows. Apparently, it was later used as a zoo, then a brothel, and, in the nineteenth century, as a poorhouse for down-on-their-luck Jews. Just beyond the palace, the nature of the walls change. The original Theodosian walls, now lost, must have continued straight north and down to the Golden Horn. The remaining sections of surviving wall are later additions, built in the reign of emperor Manuel Comnenus (1143–1180) and later. These, instead, turn northeast, petering out short of the Golden Horn, though presumably they linked up at some point with the sea walls. The area inside the walls here is attractive, with cobbled lanes twisting amongst the decrepit but proudly kept old houses. Next to the prominent İvcaz Efendi Camii is the **Anemas Zındanları** (daily 9am–7pm; 2TL), all that's left of the once magnificent Blachernae Palace. Only the vaults and corridors that ran beneath the palace remain, but there's a pleasant, shady tea garden on site.



# Eyüp

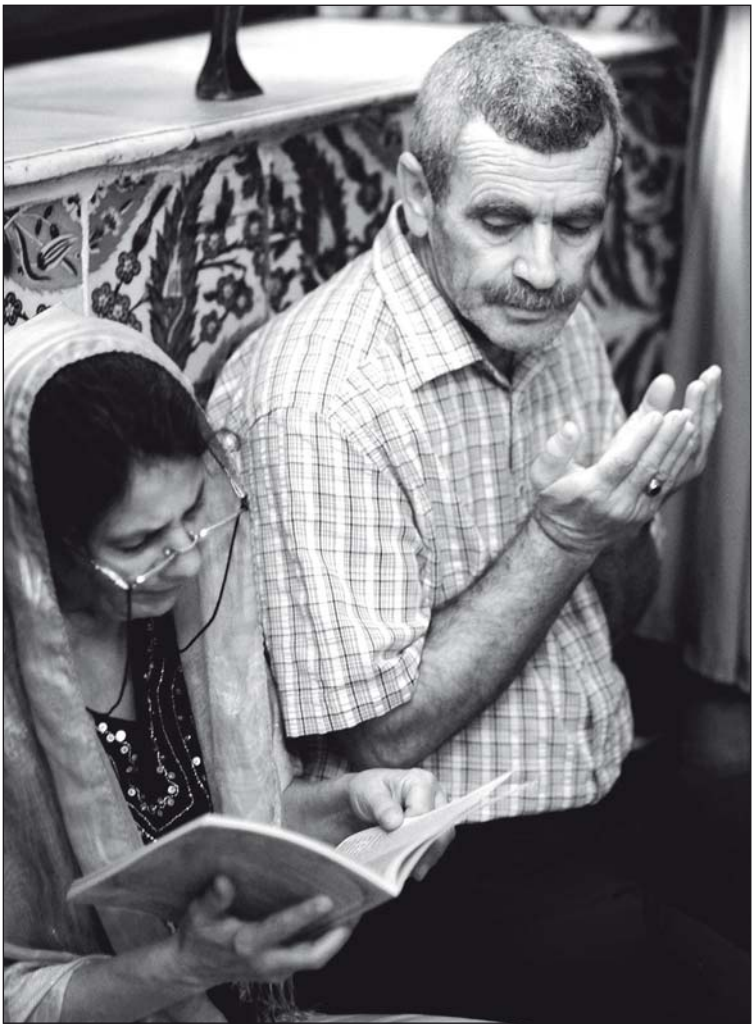
**Eyüp** around 1km north of the land walls and bordering the western bank of the Golden Horn, is one of the holiest places in Islam, its mosque being the site of the tomb of Eyüp Ensari, the Prophet Mohammed's standard-bearer. Muslims come here from all over the Islamic world on pilgrimage – try not to visit on Fridays, out of respect for conservative worshippers.

The mosque is most easily reached up the Golden Horn from Eminönü – it's the last **ferry** stop before the Horn peters out into two small streams, an area now home to Santralistanbul (see p.143). The mosque and tomb are about a ten-minute walk from the Eyüp I ferry terminal on Camii Kebir Caddesi; or catch the #99 or #39/A **bus** from Eminönü.

## Eyüp Camii

The **Eyüp Camii** was built by Mehmet the Conqueror in honour of Eyüp Ensari, one of the small group of companions of the Prophet who was killed during the first Arab siege of Constantinople (674–678); a condition of the peace treaty signed following the siege was that his tomb be preserved. Later, the mosque hosted the investiture ceremonies of the Ottoman sultans: indeed, mosque and tomb face each other across the courtyard that was used for the ceremony. The exact site is marked by a raised platform surrounded by railings, from which two plane trees grow.

The original mosque was destroyed in the eighteenth century, probably by the same earthquake that put paid to Fatih Camii. The present Baroque replacement, filled with light, gold, pale stone and white marble, was completed in 1800. The **tomb of Eyüp Ensari** (Tues–Sun 9.30am–4.30pm) is far more compelling, however (footwear should be removed and women should cover their heads before entering). Its facade and vestibule are covered in tile panels from many different periods and, although the effect is a bit overwhelming, the panels constitute a beautiful and varied display of the art form; you could spend weeks visiting individual buildings to see as many different designs and styles.



▲ Worshippers at the tomb of Eyüp Ensari

## Other tombs and Eyüp cemetery

There are a number of other important tombs in the Eyüp district, as it was a popular place of burial for Ottoman dignitaries. Two of these, the **tombs of Sokollu Mehmet Paşa and Siyavus Paşa** (Tues–Sun 9.30am–4.30pm), stand opposite each other on either side of Camii Kebir Caddesi, five-minutes' walk from Eyüp Camii towards the Golden Horn. Five years before his assassination, Sokollu Mehmet Paşa commissioned Mimar Sinan to build his tomb, an elegantly proportioned octagonal building of around 1574, notable for its stained glass, some of which is original; connected to the tomb by an elegant

three-arched colonnade is a former Koran school. Siyavus Paşa's tomb, on the other hand, was probably actually built by Sinan for the children of Siyavus Paşa, who had died young. It's decorated with İznik tiles.

Eyüp is still a popular burial place, and the hills above the mosque are covered in plain modern stones interspersed with beautiful Ottoman tombs. To the north of the mosque, off Silahtarağa Caddesi, Karyağdı Sokak leads up into the **Eyüp cemetery**. Following the signs up this lane through the graveyard – most beautiful at sunset with an arresting view of the Golden Horn – it takes about twenty minutes from Eyüp Camii to reach the romantic **Pierre Loti Café** (daily 8am–midnight) overlooking the Horn, where waiters in Ottoman costume serve up Turkish coffee.

If you've walked enough, there's a twin-cabin **cable car** linking the shores of the Golden Horn – now beginning to blossom into a park/recreation area here with pedaloes and a mock-Ottoman caique for rent – with the top of the hill (1.40TL each way, or use your *akbil*). The café was made famous by the autobiographical novel of Pierre Loti (the pen name of Julien Marie Viaud), a young French naval officer and writer of romantic novels and travel books, who fell in love with the green eyes of a Circassian *harem* girl called Aziyade in nineteenth-century İstanbul.

# 6

# Beyoğlu, Taksim and the waterfront districts



The area across the Golden Horn from Eminönü is the heart of modern, "happening" İstanbul. The vaguely defined district of **Beyoğlus**, centred on busy **İstiklal Caddesi**, has a vibrant, almost hedonistic atmosphere that makes it quite distinct from anywhere else in the city – İstanbullus come here in droves to shop, wine and dine, take in a film, club or gig, visit a gallery or theatre, or simply promenade. An increasing number of visitors are choosing to base themselves this side of the Horn and make the short hop across the river to visit the sights of the Old City, before returning to enjoy the area's vibrant nightlife. Broad İstiklal Caddesi has a period tram running its entire length, but both it, and the surrounding side streets, are best explored on foot.

İstiklal Caddesi runs for 1.5km from the **Tünel**, the recently restored funicular railway, to **Taksim Square**, the focal point of the city and a symbol of the secular Turkish Republic. The square is undeniably impressive in scale, but as an imitation of a grand Western plaza, it's not a great success, lacking the essential monumental architecture to balance its broad expanse and robbed of any real atmosphere by its confusing traffic system. North of Taksim Square are the upmarket residential suburbs of **Harbiye** and **Nişantaşı**. Once the hunting grounds of the Ottoman nobility, the area was given over to residential development in the nineteenth century and became the preserve of the monied elite – including the family of Nobel Prize-winning novelist **Orhan Pamuk** (see box, p.137), who once lived in Nişantaşı. Apart from the impressive **Military Museum** in Harbiye, there are no obvious sights here, but if you want to shop for designer-label goods in trendy boutiques, then this is the place to do it.

During the early centuries of Ottoman rule, many Spanish Jews, Moorish traders, Greeks and Armenians settled in **Galata**, which became established as the city's **European quarter**. In time, foreign powers set up their embassies in the area, and it became a popular haunt of visiting merchants, traders, seamen and adventurers. The nightlife of the quarter was notoriously riotous

even in the seventeenth century, when the Ottoman traveller Evliya Çelebi wrote "Whoever says Galata says taverns." Galata's development was hampered by the steep hill it is built on, and by the nineteenth century neighbouring Beyoğlu, on flatter land at the top of the hill, had superseded it as the location of choice for the city's European or Europeanized elite. Inspired by the boom in Beyoğlu, the district has seen its own mini revival, with the area around the **Galata Tower** being gentrified and a number of trendy boutique hotels, shops, cafés and bars springing up – although there is still plenty of grit and commercial activity on show. It's worth strolling along the former banking street of Voyvoda Caddesi, admiring the intriguing Art Nouveau-style

**Kamondo Steps** and watching the dervishes whirl at the **Galata Mevelevihanesi**. Also of interest is the **Arap Camii**, a large mosque converted from a fourteenth-century Catholic church.

The port district of **Karaköy**, between Galata and its namesake bridge, remains a gritty working area. It served as a port for both the Byzantines and the Ottomans, when it was enclosed within the walls of the Castle of Galata. The shipping industry has somewhat declined, although the massive cruise ships, so important for the city's tourism, dock here, and ferries ply up and down the Golden Horn and across to Asia from the terminal just east of the Galata Bridge. Apart from a number of fine nineteenth-century commercial buildings,

things to look out for are the **Jewish Museum**, once the Zülfaris Synagogue, and the **Yeralti Camii**.

Heading northeast from Karköy, parallel to the waterfront, is **Tophane**, a district that once housed an Ottoman cannon foundry. There are a couple of worthwhile late-Ottoman-era mosques here, the **Kılıç Ali Paşa** and the **Nusretiye**, though the main focus of interest is the trendy **İstanbul Modern** gallery, eight thousand square metres of exhibition space in a converted Bosphorus-front warehouse.

The area to the west and north, along the shore of the Golden Horn, stands in distinct contrast to the glitz of Beyoğlu and the wealth around Taksim Square. Run-down factories, off-limits military installations and neglected apartment blocks are the order of the day – but things are looking up. Urban regeneration is in full swing, and if you're looking for a break from the city's Byzantine and Ottoman past, there are three key sights spread along the Horn: the excellent **Rahmi M. Koç Industrial Museum**, with exhibits ranging from a penny-farthing to a submarine; kids' favourite **Minatürk**, with over a hundred scale models of Turkey's most famous sites; and the über-cool **Santralıstanbul**, an exhibition/museum/performance area centred on a refurbished power station on the campus of Bilgi University.



# Beyoğlu

In the Ottoman era, **Beyoğlu**, then known as Pera (Greek for "beyond" or "across") was, along with Galata, the **European quarter** of the city. Home to merchants, businessmen and diplomats, one of the joys of the district are its fine nineteenth-century, Parisian-style apartment blocks – a complete contrast to the wooden buildings in the largely Muslim quarters of the Old City across the Golden Horn. The area also became very popular with the city's non-Muslim minorities, and the names of Greek architects adorn the front of some of İstiklal Caddesi's grander buildings. Growth was encouraged by the completion of the *Orient Express* railway in 1899, bringing tourists to the area and resulting in the construction of many grand hotels, including the famous *Pera Palas Hotel*. Beyoğlu continued to prosper into the early years of the twentieth century, with musical halls, opera houses, inns, cinemas and restaurants all being well attended.

Although the Greek minority escaped the population exchange of 1923, (see p.327) many began to drift away, a situation exacerbated by the wealth tax imposed on Turkey's minorities in World War II and the anti-Greek riots of the 1950s. Other minority groups such as the Armenians and Jews followed suit, and Beyoğlu began to lose both its cosmopolitanism and its prosperity – and became positively sleazy. The revival began in the late 1980s, and, in 1990, the pedestrianization of **İstiklal Caddesi** and the reinstallation of the old tramway heralded the transformation of the area. Today, Beyoğlu's old cosmopolitan nature is reasserting itself, partly owing to the increased number of tourists, but also because foreigners are snapping up the district's atmospheric apartments.

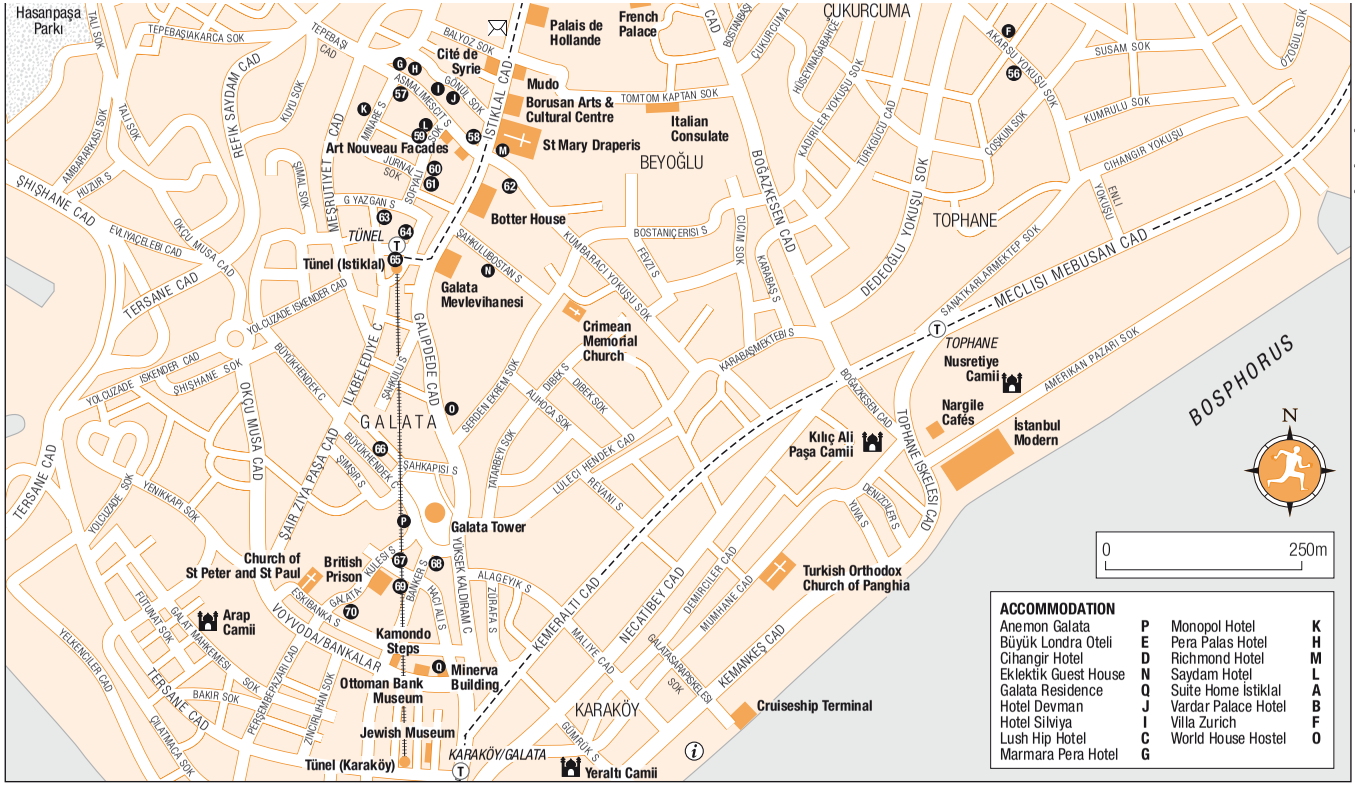
## İstiklal Caddesi: the Tünel to Galatasaray Meydanı

Known as the "Grand Rue de Pera" prior to the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, **İstiklal Caddesi** (Independence St) is the city's most

exciting street – but there is far more to this heaving thoroughfare than shopping and entertainment. It was widened and straightened following a fire in 1870 that destroyed over 3000 buildings in Beyoğlu: to fully appreciate its unspoilt and (largely) late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century architectural delights, you need to keep your eyes up, above the level of the shops and eateries – which is easier said than done, given the number of milling shoppers, uneven paving stones, speeding vehicles and trams to contend with.

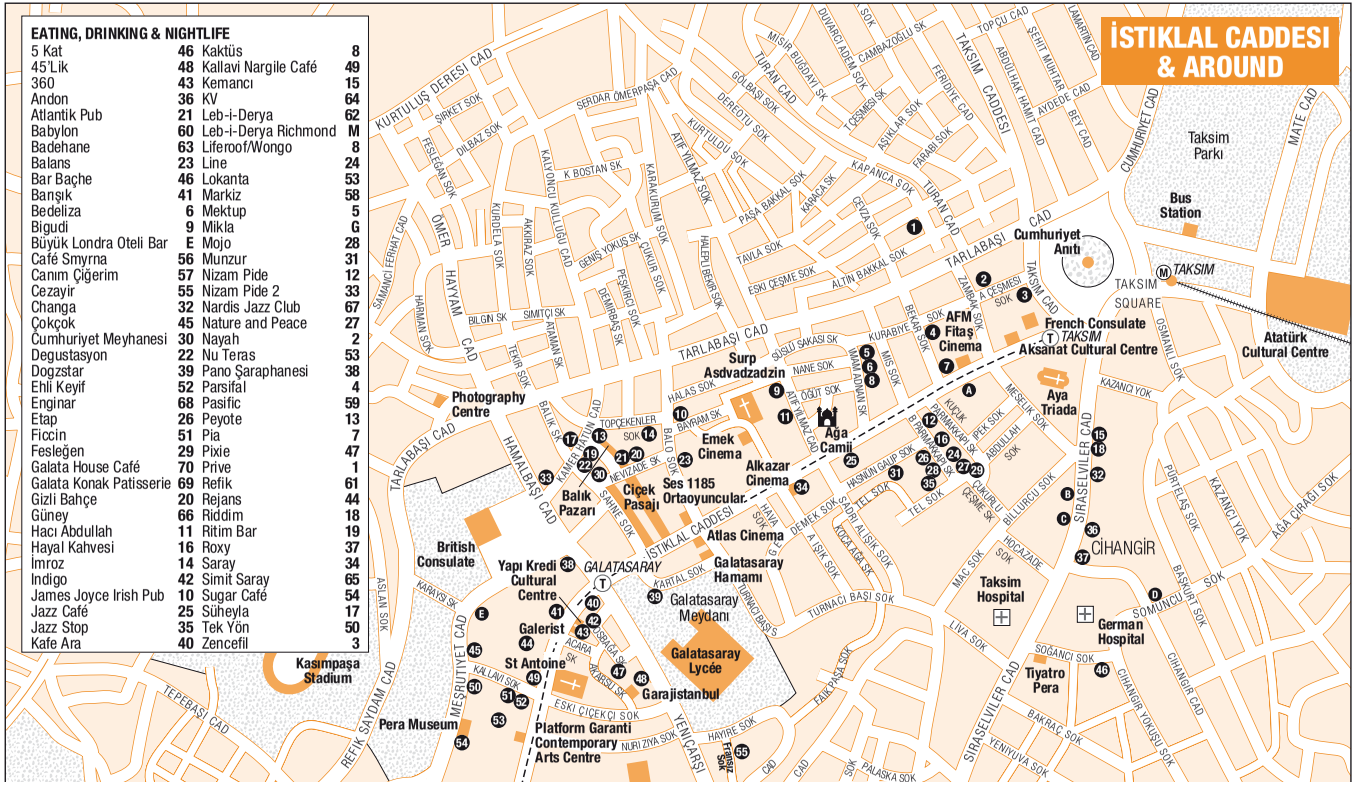
From the southern end of the street, where the Tünel funicular disgorges its passengers, the first point of interest is the **Botter House**, at nos. 457–477.

▲ A tram on Istiklal Caddesi




**ACCOMMODATION**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Anemon Galata | P | Monopol Hotel | K |
| Büyük Londra Oteli | E | Pera Palas Hotel | H |
| Cihangir Hotel | D | Richmond Hotel | M |
| Eklektik Guest House | N | Saydam Hotel | L |
| Galata Residence | Q | Suite Home İstiklal | A |
| Hotel Devman | J | Vardar Palace Hotel | B |
| Hotel Silviya | I | Villa Zurich | F |
| Lush Hip Hotel | C | World House Hostel | O |
| Marmara Pera Hotel | G | | |


İSTIKLAL CADDESI & AROUND
EATING, DRINKING & NIGHTLIFE
5 Kat 46
45'Lik 48
360 43
Andon 36
Atlantik Pub 21
Babylon 60
Badehane 63
Balans 23
Bar Bache 46
Barışık 41
Bedeliza 6
Bigudi 9
Büyük Londra Oteli Bar E
Café Smyrna 56
Canım Çiğerim 57
Cezayir 55
Changa 32
Çokçok 45
Cumhuriyet Meyhanesi 30
Degustasyon 22
Dogzstar 39
Ehli Keyif 52
Enginar 68
Etap 26
Ficcin 51
Fesleğen 29
Galata House Café 70
Galata Konak Patisserie 69
Gizli Bahçe 20
Güney 66
Hacı Abdullah 11
Hayal Kahvesi 16
İmroz 14
Indigo 42
James Joyce Irish Pub 10
Jazz Café 25
Jazz Stop 35
Kafe Ara 40
Kaktüs 8
Kallavi Nargile Café 49
Kemancı 15
KV 64
Leb-i-Derya 62
Leb-i-Derya Richmond M
Liferoof/Wongo 8
Line 24
Lokanta 53
Markiz 58
Mektup 5
Mikla G
Mojo 28
Munzur 31
Nizam Pide 12
Nizam Pide 2 33
Nardis Jazz Club 67
Nature and Peace 27
Nayah 2
Nu Teras 53
Pano Şaraphanesi 38
Parsifal 4
Pasific 59
Peyote 13
Pia 7
Pixie 47
Prive 1
Refik 61
Rejans 44
Riddim 18
Ritim Bar 19
Roxy 37
Saray 34
Simit Saray 65
Sugar Café 54
Süheyla 17
Tek Yön 50
Zencefil 3
Taksim Parkı
Bus Station
Cumhuriyet Anıtı
TAKSIM
TAKSIM SQUARE
French Consulate
TAKSIM Aksanat Cultural Centre
Atatürk Cultural Centre
AFM Fitaş Cinema
Surp Asdvadzadzin
Aya Triada
Photography Centre
Ağa Camii
Emek Cinema
Alkazar Cinema
Ses 1185 Ortaoyuncular
Çiçek Pasajı
Balık Pazarı
Atlas Cinema
Galatasaray Hamamı
Galatasaray Meydanı
Galatasaray Lycée
GALATASARAY
Yapı Kredi Cultural Centre
British Consulate
Galerist
St Antoine
Garajistanbul
Platform Garanti Contemporary Arts Centre
Pera Museum
Kasımpaşa Stadium
Taksim Hospital
German Hospital
Tiyatro Pera
CİHANGİR
İSTIKLAL CADDESI
TARLABAŞI CAD
KURTULUŞ DERESI CAD
TEPEBAŞI CAD
REFIK SAYDAM CAD
SIRASELVILER CAD
CUMHURIYET CAD
TAKSIM CADDESI

Widely regarded as the finest building of its kind in the city, the apartment block boasts a stone facade decorated with stylized, relief-carved flowers and wrought-iron work executed in the "whiplash" style so typical of the curvilinear Art Nouveau movement. Commissioned in 1901 as a showroom, workshop and family house by Dutchman Jan Botter, tailor and couturier to Sultan Abdülhamid II, it is one of a number of structures around İstanbul designed by the Italian architect Raimondo D'Aronco. Unfortunately, the building is currently unoccupied and is in a disgraceful condition, with an ugly iron support beam, fly-posters and dusty, broken windows disfiguring its gorgeous exterior.

Just beyond the Botter House, down steep Kumbaracı Yokuşu and right up Serden Ekrem Sokak, is the incongruous Anglican **Crimean Memorial Church**. Renamed Christ Church after restoration work in the 1990s, it was built both to serve the city's British community and to remember the dead of the Crimean War (hence its original name) and was completed in 1868. Designed by G.E. Street (the architect responsible for the Royal Courts of Justice in London), this fine church was constructed mainly with stone imported from Malta, and set in a walled compound-garden of chestnut, fig, oleander and palms. Much of the congregation is made of refugees from, primarily, Sri Lanka but also from the Sudan and Nigeria – some of whom live in the vaults below the church.

Back on the main drag, opposite Kumbaracı Yokuşu, is buzzing **Asmalımescit Sokak** and its ancilliary alleys, where graffiti artists ply their illicit craft and provide a decorative background for the city's alternative types. The many cafés, bars and restaurants crammed into this small area fill up the narrow alleys with tables, especially on weekend evenings, when the area is full of revellers. There are a couple of interesting **Art Nouveau facades** here, one fronting the Atlas Apartment building at Asmalımescit Sok 5/A, the other around the corner on Sofyalı Sok 5, next to the *Saydam Hotel*.

It's only a stone's throw away but the atmosphere on Meşrutiyet Caddesi, running parallel with İstiklal Caddesi to the south, is completely different, more

## The Pera Palas Hotel

Sirkeci station, across the Golden Horn in Eminönü, may have been the terminus for the famous *Orient Express*, but for many of its well-heeled passengers, the palatial **Pera Palas Hotel** was the real end of the line. Designed in the flamboyant Rococo style by the Turkish-French architect Alexander Vallaury and completed in 1892, this luxurious hotel ensured wealthy European visitors to the city enjoyed the levels of comfort they were accustomed to in London or Paris. Situated in the district of Pera (today's Beyoğlu), the European quarter of the city, the *Pera Palas* hosted an array of impressive and glamorous **guests**. The founder of the Turkish Republic, Kemal Atatürk, was a frequent visitor, and the room he used, 101, has been turned into a **museum** in his honour. Ernest Hemingway stayed here whilst reporting on the Turkish War of Independence in the early 1920s; actresses Zsa Zsa Gabor, Greta Garbo and Rita Hayworth brought a touch of Hollywood glamour, the courtesan turned spy, Mata Hari, a frisson of decadent intrigue. Alfred Hitchcock checked into the *Pera Palas* when he was in İstanbul, whilst another master of suspense, Agatha Christie, was a regular guest and wrote part of *Murder on the Orient Express* in her favourite room, 411.

The *Pera Palas* was closed for restoration at the time of writing, and is scheduled to re-open in late 2009. No doubt it will have lost some of the dilapidated charm that has made it so popular over the years, leaving the nearby *Büyük Londra Oteli* (see p.181) as the last bastion of faded *fin-de-siècle* hotel grandeur in Beyoğlu.

refined and businesslike. It is home to the legendary **Pera Palas Hotel** (see box opposite) and one of the city's premier galleries, the **Pera Müzesi** (Pera Museum: Tues–Sat 10am–7pm & Sun noon–6pm; 7TL), housed in a beautifully restored late nineteenth-century building, once the prestigious *Bristol Hotel*. Most impressive of the permanent exhibits is a collection of European Orientalist paintings dating from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, including Osman Hamdi's *Tortoise Trainer*, which the museum paid US$3.5 million to acquire. Other permanent exhibits include a collection of Anatolian weights and measures and a room devoted to ceramics (particularly tiles) from Küthaya. The museum also hosts major temporary exhibitions featuring work from artists such as Joan Miró.

Back on İstiklal Caddesi, the **Patisserie Markiz** at no. 360–2, boasts a beautiful Art Nouveau interior. Pride of place is given to two faïence wall panels designed and executed in France, *Le Printemps* and *L'Automne*. Unfortunately, the place is now run by a rather bland coffee-chain and has lost some of its character. Further up on the right, at no. 429, is the oldest church in the area, **St Mary Draperis**, set well below street level and reached by a steep flight of steps. Its origins on this site (the church was founded in the fifteenth century across the Golden Horn in Sirkeci) go back to 1678, but several fires over the centuries mean that the current building, designed by the Italian architect Semprini, dates only to 1904. A little way up the street, on the left, lie the **Cité de Syrie**, an arcade with a fine facade designed by the Greek architect Bassiladis in 1908, and, opposite, at no. 401, a beautifully restored Art Nouveau building, home to the upmarket gift and clothing emporium, **Mudo**. The joy is the interior, with its wonderfully carved, glass-fronted display cabinets. The recently restored **Palais de Hollande** at İstiklal Caddesi 393 was built in 1858 on the site of the home of Cornelis Haga, the first Dutch diplomat in Constantinople during the fifteenth century. It now houses the Consulate to the Netherlands. The Franciscan **church of St Antoine** at no. 325 is a fine example of red-brick neo-Gothic architecture, and the most visited church in the area. Originally founded in 1725 it was demolished to make way for a tramway at the beginning of the century and rebuilt in 1913 by the İstanbul-born, Italian architect Mongeri.

Further along İstiklal Caddesi, you can detour down Nuri Ziya Sokak to the imposing **French Palace**, with its large central courtyard and formally laid-out gardens, the residence of ambassadors and consuls from 1831. Below the palace, on Tomtom Kaptan Sokak, stands the **Italian Consulate**, originally the Palazzo di Venezia, built in the seventeenth century and the earliest surviving diplomatic building in Beyoğlu. Casanova stayed here in 1744, and according to his memoirs, he didn't make a single conquest, although one İsmail Efendi claims to have been seduced by him. Just short of Galatasaray Meydanı, on the south side of the street, on Tosbağı Sokak, is the excellent *Kafe Ara*, much frequented by the city's most renowned photographer, Ara Güler (see box, p.132), whose blown-up pictures of bygone İstanbul adorn the walls

## İstiklal Caddesi: Galatasaray Meydanı to Taksim Square

The small square a little less than halfway along İstiklal Caddesi is known as **Galatasaray Meydanı** and is named after the famous school, the **Galatasaray Lycée**, set behind iron railings to the south of the square. The *lycée* was originally founded in the fifteenth century to complement the Palace School in the Topkapı Sarayı. The current school originated in 1868, when it was

Following the banning of political rallies in Taksim Square, at the northern end of İstiklal Caddesi, many **demonstrations** now begin at Galatasaray Meydanı and head up towards Taksim. Most are peaceful, but they're all heavily supervised by helmeted, shield-carrying, baton-waving riot police, and things do sometimes get out of hand.



remodelled on French lines, though the building it is housed in dates back only to 1908. Many of Turkey's leading academics, politicians and civil servants were educated here. One of the by-products of the new, Western curriculum, was sport, and in 1905 the nation's leading football team, **Galatasaray** (see p.238), was born here. According to a founder member, the student Ali Sami Yen (after whom the club's stadium, several kilometres away in Mecidiköy, is named), the idea was dreamt up in an English literature class. A small museum devoted to the club (Wed 1.30–3pm; free) is for dedicated followers of football only.

A hundred metres or so north of İstiklal Caddesi, off Hamalbaşı Caddesi, is the **British Consulate**, the most impressive of all the consular buildings in Beyoğlu. Completed in 1855, it is set, following the 2003 terrorist attack that killed the then British Consul Roger Short, in a well-protected walled compound. It is a striking Renaissance-style structure, designed by Charles Barry, architect of the Houses of Parliament in Westminster. To the south, reached from Yeniçarşı Caddesi, is the bland **Fransız Sokakağı** (originally Cezayır Sokağı), a rather too obvious attempt to create a mini French quarter from the rows of late nineteenth-century townhouses lining the street.

The character of the street changes markedly as you head north from here towards Taksim, becoming less arty and more mainstream, with an even greater concentration of shops, bars, cafés, restaurants and clubs – plus all of

## Ara Güler: İstanbul's Henri Cartier-Bresson

Turkey's foremost photographer, **Ara Güler** was born in İstanbul in 1928, beginning his career in journalism in the same city in 1950. Learning his trade on local rags, his talent eventually brought him to the attention of the international press. In 1961, he became a correspondent for *Time-Life* and, before long, he was operating as a photojournalist for *Paris-Match* and *Der Sturm*. After making friends with Henri Cartier-Bresson, he joined the renowned Paris-based Magnum Agency.

Güler has taken pictures all around the world and interviewed and photographed such famous luminaries as Winston Churchill, Picasso and Salvador Dalí, but it is for the startling **black and white images** of his native city that Güler will be best remembered. It is no surprise that İstanbul's most famous literary son, Nobel Prize-winner Orhan Pamuk (see box, p.137), a Beyoğlu neighbour of Güler, used a selection of his photographs to illustrate his 2005 memoir *Istanbul: Memories of a City*. Pamuk's melancholic text is enhanced by Güler's gritty images – ferries on the Golden Horn belching black smoke, washing strung across dank, narrow streets in the poor neighbourhood of Balat, or a ragged street urchin peeping out from behind an Ottoman tombstone in Eyüp.

There always seems to be an **exhibition** of Güler's work on somewhere in the city (in 2008, his images adorned Taksim's metro station), so keep an eye out for details in the press and Listings magazines. For an idea of Güler's mastery of his craft – the small size and poor-quality reproduction of the photographs used in Pamuk's book do not do his images justice – check out the 1994 book *A Photographical Sketch on Lost İstanbul*. You won't be disappointed by the man who has done more for İstanbul than Bresson did for Paris.

Beyoğlu's cinemas. The famous **Çiçek Pasajı** (Flower Passage) is certainly the most comprehensively restored of the many fine turn-of-the-twentieth-century arcades that run off at right angles from İstiklal Caddesi. Its heyday was in the 1930s, when the music and entertainment was supplied courtesy of anti-Bolshevik Russian émigrés, and these days it's home to a collection of attractive but rather overpriced and touristy restaurants – it's far better to head through to the **Balik Pazarı** (Fish Market), particularly **Nevizade Sokak**, a street dedicated entirely to fish restaurants (all with outside tables in the warmer months), and incredibly lively bars and clubs. Nearby, just off Sakızağacı Caddesi, is the **Surp Asdvadzadzin Armenian Catholic Church**, one of fifteen scattered around the city, a large, barnlike place currently undergoing restoration.

Wander into the streets south and east of İstiklal Caddesi up here and you immediately escape the hustle and bustle and enter a world of alternative-clothes stores and bric-a-brac shops. There are few genuine bargains to be had (unless you really know your stuff), but it's fun poking around. The best place to begin searching is **Turnacı Başı Sokak**, which is also home to the best *hamam* this side of the Golden Horn, the **Galatasaray Hamamı**. The *hamam* underwent massive refurbishment in the 1960s, though it dates back to 1485. This neighbourhood is known as **Çukurcuma**, and although run-down at the moment, it looks certain to follow the lead of adjoining **Cihangir**, a trendy arty district where well-heeled İstanbullus (and a growing number of foreigners) gaze down on the Bosphorus from stylish pavement cafés.

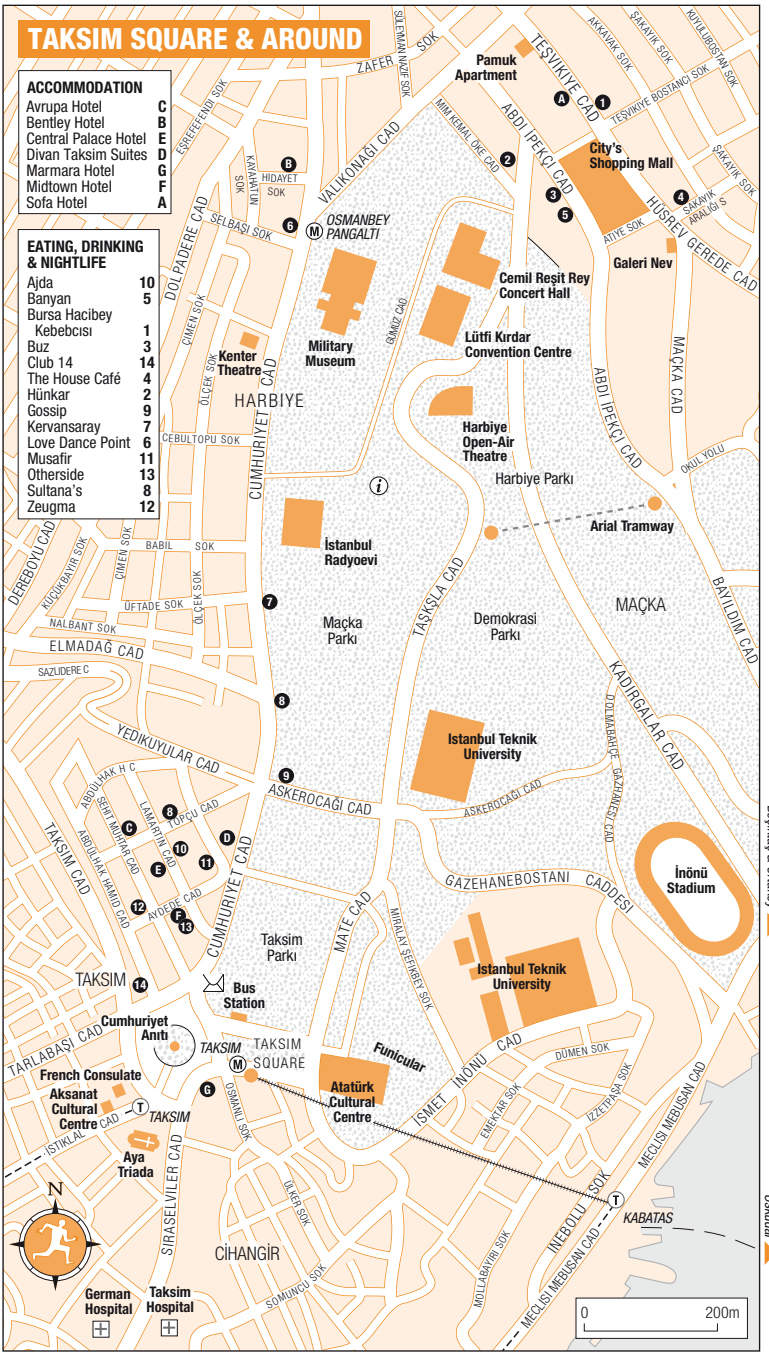
Back on İstiklal, a couple of **cinemas** worth checking out for their period feel are the Alkazar, at no. 179, and the Emek, to the north on Yesilcam Sokak. The narrow entrance to the Alkazar, originally a theatre, is flanked by a pair of female, semi-nude, Neoclassical statues. At the very end of the street, as it runs into Taksim Square, is the monumental Greek Orthodox Church of **Aya Triada**. Designed in 1880 by Vasili Ionnidi, it is built to a cruciform plan, with the main body of the church surmounted by a mighty dome. The interior is beautifully decorated, with the marble and gilt iconstasis particularly impressive. It's difficult to gain entry unless you coincide with a service, so Sunday mornings are the best bet.

## Taksim Square and around

**Taksim Square** takes its name from the low **stone reservoir** on its south side, constructed in 1732 to distribute water brought from the Belgrade Forest by aqueduct ("Taksim" in Turkish means "distribution"). The *taksim*'s octagonal annexe, located on the İstiklal Caddesi side, has stone birdhouses above its door that are carved to look like miniature Ottoman houses.

Steps on the north side of the square above the main bus terminal lead up to the pleasant **Taksim Parkı**, with its bench-lined paths and open-air tea gardens. The unusual occurrence of a park here – wholly typical of traditional Islamic city planning – is a glorious relief after you've been grubbing around in the backstreets of the Old City.

The monumental **Atatürk Kültür Merkezi or AKM** (Atatürk Cultural Centre: see p.216), to the east of the square, is one of the leading venues for İstanbul's various international festivals, and is home to the State Opera and Ballet, the Symphony Orchestra and the State Theatre Company. Designed by


TAKSIM SQUARE & AROUND
ACCOMMODATION
Avrupa Hotel C
Bentley Hotel B
Central Palace Hotel E
Divan Taksim Suites D
Marmara Hotel G
Midtown Hotel F
Sofa Hotel A
EATING, DRINKING & NIGHTLIFE
Ajda 10
Banyan 5
Bursa Hacibey Kebebcısı 1
Buz 3
Club 14 14
The House Café 4
Hünkar 2
Gossip 9
Kervansaray 7
Love Dance Point 6
Musafir 11
Otherside 13
Sultana's 8
Zeugma 12
Pamuk Apartment
City's Shopping Mall
Galeri Nev
Cemil Reşit Rey Concert Hall
Lütfi Kırdar Convention Centre
Military Museum
Kenter Theatre
Harbiye Open-Air Theatre
Harbiye Parkı
Arial Tramway
İstanbul Radyoevi
Maçka Parkı
Demokrasi Parkı
MAÇKA
Istanbul Teknik University
İnönü Stadium
Taksim Parkı
Bus Station
Cumhuriyet Anıtı
TAKSIM SQUARE
Funicular
Atatürk Cultural Centre
French Consulate
Aksanat Cultural Centre
Aya Triada
CİHANGİR
German Hospital
Taksim Hospital
KABATAS
ZAFER SOK
VALİKONAĞI CAD
DOLAPDERE CAD
CUMHURIYET CAD
HARBIYE
ABDI IPEKÇI CAD
MAÇKA CAD
TAŞKIŞLA CAD
BAYILDIM CAD
KADIRGALAR CAD
ELMADAĞ CAD
YEDIKUYULAR CAD
ASKEROCAĞI CAD
GAZEHANEBOSTANI CADDESI
TAKSIM CAD
MATE CAD
İNÖNÜ CAD
MECLIS MEBUSAN CAD
İSTIKLAL
SIRASELVILER CAD
TARLABAŞI CAD
Beşiktaş & Ortaköy
Üsküdar
Beyoğlu & Sultanahmet
0
200m
N

### Troubled times in Taksim Square

Taksim Square's central location and scale make it ideal for **mass gatherings** and subsequent expressions of public feeling. The official Republic Day rallies held to celebrate important dates in Turkey's history (see p.311) convene here, as do hordes of chanting football fans following matches involving the national team or one of the city's big three club sides. On New Year's Eve, the plaza is thronged with revellers.

But when it comes to **political protests**, Taksim Square, a focus for left-wing and trade-union protests since the 1950s, has a bloody and violent history. In February 1969, over 30,000 leftists, angry at Turkey's pro-American policies, marched on the square. Violence erupted when they were met by roving gangs of right-wing agitators, who allegedly attacked the demonstrators with knives and batons, resulting in the deaths of two protestors and the wounding of 150 more – an event now known as "**Bloody Sunday**". Worse was to come on May 1, 1977 when, during a Labour Day demonstration that attracted around half a million people, 36 of the predominantly left-wing demonstrators were killed. As in 1969, the perpetrators were allegedly right-wing extremists – shooting into the crowd from the roof of the *Intercontinental* (now the *Marmara*) *Hotel* and other buildings around the square – though no one was ever brought to justice for the attack.

Political rallies here were subsequently **banned**, but in 1997, on the twentieth anniversary of the May Day massacres, hundreds of demonstrators broke through a cordon of riot police and into the square. In 2008, trade-union leaders had a request to hold a May Day rally refused by the ruling AKP, who were strongly criticized for suppressing the planned demonstration. The controversies surrounding Taksim Square look set to run and run.

architect Hayati Tabanioğlu in 1956 it has, like so many concrete international-modern buildings, attracted a great deal of criticism, and there are plans to demolish it.

## The Military Museum

Housed in the military academy where Atatürk received some of his education, the **Askeri Müzesi** (Military Museum: Wed–Sun 9am–5pm; 3TL), 1.5km north of Taksim Square, along Cumhuriyet Caddesi, is one of the most impressive in the country and well worth visiting – not least to hear the Mehter Band, which plays outside on summer afternoons. To get there, walk or catch bus #48/N north along Cumhuriyet Caddesi to the İstanbul Radyoevi (radio building), turn right after the building and follow Gümüz Caddesi past the Lüfti Kırdar Convention Centre – the museum's entrance is on the right. Inside, there's a comprehensive collection of military memorabilia proudly displayed and labelled in English, evidence of the Turks' intense pride in their military history. The most striking exhibits are the cotton- and silk-embroidered tents used by campaigning sultans. You'll also find a rich collection of Ottoman armour and weaponry, including beautifully ornamented *jambiyah* daggers, and a piece of the chain used by the Byzantines to close off the entrance of the Golden Horn in 1453.

The **Mehter Band** originated in 1289. Its members were janissaries, who would accompany the sultan into battle, and the band became an institution, symbolizing the power and independence of the Ottoman Empire. During public performances, band members sang songs about their hero ancestors and Ottoman battle victories. They had considerable influence in Europe, helping create new musical styles, such as Spanish *a la turca*, and inspiring numerous composers

▲ Taksim Square

(examples include Mozart's *Marcia Turca* and Beethoven's *Ruinen von Athens*, *Opus 113*). The kettledrum, *kös* in Turkish, was also introduced to the West as a result of interest in the Mehter Band. The band was abolished by Mahmut II in 1826, along with the janissary corps, and only re-established in 1914, when new instruments were added. The pieces played nowadays (Wed–Sun 3–4pm) include some dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and others written by Giuseppi Donizetti for Mahmut II's new army.

## Galata

The fascinating district of **Galata** is dominated by the landmark Galata Tower, but there's much else to see. Be prepared to walk to see it, though, as the narrow, steep streets are impractical for public transport (the underground funicular, Tünel, excepted, of course). Bankalar and Voyvoda *caddesi*s, reached by walking up the hill from the north end of the Galata Bridge along Karaköy Caddesi, are lined with superb nineteenth-century buildings, and were once (as the name "Bankalar" suggests) the city's banking centre. Occupying a corner plot at the end of Bankalar Caddesi is a beautifully restored building, the **Minerva Han**, dating to 1911. The beige facade is enlivened by panels of pale-blue tiles, whilst a couple of Neoclassical stone statues, in the form of cherubs holding baskets of fruit, surmount the entrance. Formerly the Greek Bank of Athens, the building is now an annexe of the Sabancı University.

Just along the aptly named Bankalar Caddesi (Street of Banks) and housed, appropriately, in the former head office of the Ottoman Bank, is the massive **Ottoman Bank Museum** (daily 10am–6pm; 3TL). It approaches the history

## Orhan Pamuk: unlikely hero of conscience

Most Turks just don't know what to make of İstanbul-born novelist **Orhan Pamuk** – the nation's first Nobel Prize-winner. To the liberal left, he's a talented, noble figure who dares to challenge the Kemalist, nationalist-orientated establishment – who in turn accuse him of betraying his country. Moderates are happy to bask in the success of one of their nation's sons without questioning his beliefs too closely; many others are quick to condemn him whilst studiously avoiding actually reading any of his output (a provincial official, outraged at Pamuk's comments about Turkey's treatment of the Armenians and Kurds, ordered that all his books in the local library be burnt – only to find there were none there).

The **controversy** surrounding Pamuk began in 2004, when the previously cautious novelist granted an interview to a Swiss newspaper. Until then known for his reticence on all things political, he said "I am the only one willing to say that one million Armenians and thirty thousand Kurds were murdered in Turkey". He was accused of "insulting Turkishness", a crime under article 301 of the Turkish Constitution. Although the accusation was subsequently dropped, the controversy continued, and in 2008 it emerged that Pamuk may have been the **assassination target** of an ultra-nationalist "deep-state" gang working within the establishment.

What is surprising is that such a storm has broken over the head of this benign-looking, fifty-something intellectual born into a wealthy family in the respectable **Nişantaş** district of the city. An urbane, cerebral author, his early works dealt with cultural and philosophical rather than political issues, and it wasn't until 2004's *Snow* that Pamuk engaged in any kind of political discourse. Many Turkish cynics, however, believe that by bringing up two of the nations "sacred cows" – the so-called **Armenian Genocide** and the "**Kurdish problem**" – in an interview with a European newspaper, he was deliberately courting what they saw as the anti-Turkish West in the hope of winning the Nobel Prize. Such machinations on Pamuk's part, however, seem most unlikely. This is a man deeply, if sometimes ambiguously, attached to both his home city and his country (his office is in Beyoğlu). When asked by *Der Spiegel* whether he, a lifelong Fenerbahçe fan, would support Turkey in the upcoming 2008 European Football Championships, Pamuk replied "Although the coach, Fatih Terim, is an ultra-nationalist, of course I will support Turkey", before typically tempering this with the words "Football is not an opium in Turkey, it is more like a machine producing nationalism, xenophobia and authoritarian thinking".

It is, in part, Pamuk's open **rejection of nationalism**, in a country still in nation-building mode, which makes him an object of suspicion. He also admits to an uneasy relationship with İstanbul. In his moving 2005 memoir, *İstanbul: Memories of a City*, Pamuk writes of his home city as always being "a city of ruins and of end-of-empire melancholy. I've spent my life either battling with this melancholy, or (like all İstanbullus) making it my own". Pamuk has the need, the courage, to say how he really feels – about himself, his family, his city and his nation – in a country where often collective, rather than individual needs, dominate. It is this individuality that makes him so accessible to Western readers, and helps explain why he is likely to remain more popular outside his homeland than within it.

of banking in the late Ottoman Empire and Republican periods in both a chronological and thematic way and hosts a surprisingly interesting selection of temporary exhibitions. Running up from Voyvoda Caddesi are the sculptural **Kamondo Steps**, gracefully curving twin staircases that were commissioned and paid for by the wealthy Jewish Kamondo family, and photographed by Henri Cartier-Bresson in the 1960s. Further west, on Yanık Kapı ("Burned Gate") Sokak, is the only remaining Genoese **city gate**. Somewhat the worse for wear, it still boasts a marble slab bearing the Cross of St George.

Of the many churches that once crowded the narrow streets of Galata, few original structures now remain. One notable exception is the unusual building on Galata Mahkemesi Sokak, now a mosque known as the **Arap Camii**. With its tall square tower and pyramidal roof, it was, under the Genoese, the largest church in Galata but was later converted into a mosque to serve the needs of the Moorish community that settled here in the early sixteenth century following their expulsion from Spain. It stands on one side of an attractive closed courtyard, decorated with assorted pieces of ancient marble. Further up the hill on Galata Külesi Sokak the Dominican **Church of St Peter and St Paul** dates back to the fifteenth century though the current building, designed by the Fossati Brothers (who were also responsible for the restoration of the Aya Sofya) only dates back to 1841. Mass is held every day at 7.30am and on Sundays at 11am.

About 100m below the tower, at Galata Külesi Sok 61, is an even more unusual relic, the **British prison**. Under the capitulations granted by the Ottomans, Western powers had the right to try their citizens under their own law, rather than the draconian Ottoman code, so consulates possessed their own courthouses and prisons. The court as an institution of the consulate originated in the 1600s, but the current building dates from 1904 and today houses the *Galata House* restaurant-café (see p.193). The owners will happily show you graffiti left by former inmates, including a sketch of the Rock of Gibraltar and the poignant words, "An unfavourable wind has brought the ship of my life to this shore."

## The Galata Tower

Built in 1349 by the Genoese, the **Galata Kulesi** (Galata Tower: daily 9am–8pm; 10TL) sits on the site of a former tower constructed by Justinian in 528. Originally known as the Tower of Christ, it stood at the apex of the several sets of fortifications that surrounded the Genoese city-state. It has had a number of functions over the centuries, including a jail, a fire tower and even a springboard for early adventurers attempting to fly. Nowadays, there's a café on the top floor offering predictably overpriced drinks and snacks.

At 61m high, the tower's **viewing gallery** – reached by elevator – offers magnificent panoramas of the city and views across the Sea of Marmara and the Golden Horn. The best view of Eminönü in particular is from here: the boats that nudge in and out of the ferry terminal form a foreground to the skyline of Beyazit and Sultanahmet, with Yeni Camii directly below Nuruosmaniye, the Spice Bazaar below Beyazit Camii and Rüstem Paşa Camii below the Beyazit fire tower.

The area around the base of the tower has recently been refurbished and is now a pleasant plaza area where locals and tourists alike sit and watch the world go by from a park bench or one of the cafés opening onto the square.

## The Galata Mevlevihanesi

Above the tower on Galipdede Caddesi, near to where it joins İstiklal Caddesi, an unassuming doorway on the left leads to the courtyard of the **Galata Mevlevihanesi**, also referred to as the Divan Literature Museum (daily except Tues 9.30am–5pm; 5TL). A former *tekke* (monastery) containing a *semahane* (ceremonial hall) of the whirling dervishes, the building now serves as a museum to the Mevlevi Sufi sect. Constructed in the late fifteenth century, this is the oldest surviving dervish monastery in İstanbul, though it has been rebuilt

several times since. It was closed for restoration at the time of writing, and it's uncertain what will be on display when it re-opens, though hopefully the musical instruments that provided the sounds the dervishes whirled to will be back in place. The Mevlevi Sufi order is one of the many mystical sects of İslam that were once rife across Anatolia, and were banned by Atatürk because of their supposed political affiliations and religious conservatism. The founder of the sect, Mevlana, was an iconclast who, in the thirteenth century, repudiated the strictures and hypocrisy of mainstream Sunni İslam. He preached love, charity and tolerance and believed that union with God was possible through contemplation, meditation, dance and music (hence the "whirling" ceremonies the disciples engage in).

The whirling dervishes perform *sema* dances to Sufi music on the second and last Sunday of every month (May–Sept 5pm; Oct–April 3pm; 25TL), with the main ceremony on December 17, the annual Mevlana holiday – though following restoration, this may be subject to change.

## Karaköy

The port area of **Karaköy,** stretching from the Atatürk Bridge in the west and along the waterfront to Tophane to the east, is beginning to lose some – though not all – of its rough-and-ready character. Just before the **Galata Bridge**, the vital link between the two sides of European İstanbul (see p.83), is a small dock from where Türyol ferries run across the Golden Horn to Eminönü and across the Bosphorus to Üsküdar, Haydarpaşa and Kadıköy. Just inland from the bridge is the **Tünel** underground funicular (see p.31), which will whisk you up to İstiklal Caddesi; the Tünel entrance is on Tersane Caddesi, just to the left of the first road junction beyond the bridge.

The single most interesting sight here, the **Azaz Kapı Camii**, situated below the level of traffic-choked Atatürk Bridge, is a fine Sinan mosque, completed in 1578. At its entrance is an ornate marble *sebil* (fountain) built in the Baroque style in 1733 for Valide Sultan Saliha Hatun, mother of Sultan Mahmut I. A little way east of the fountain, it's possible to cut down to the waterfront, a run-down area of ships' chandlers (where you can purchase anchors and chains) and a few basic restaurants specializing in grilled fish and *köfte*. The views across to Eminönü are impressive, though it's an area best avoided at night.

Karaköy's port, originally a Byzantine, then Ottoman shipyard, was once enclosed within the walls of the Castle of Galata, and from 1446 until the fall of the Byzantine city to the Ottomans in 1453, was further protected by a great chain stretched across the mouth of the Horn to prevent enemy ships from entering. Originally constructed around 580, the subterranean keep of the castle is thought to be preserved as the **Yeraltı Camii**, or "Underground Mosque", on Kemankeş Caddesi. Inside is a forest of thick columns, supporting a low, vaulted ceiling. Two tombs in one corner purport to be those of Muslim martyrs killed in the first Arab siege of Byzantium (674–678 AD). There are a number of passable waterfront restaurants heading east from the bridge, though front-of-house hustlers abound, as this is where the cruise-ship passengers disembark after docking at the modernist Karaköy terminal, recognizable by its distinctive airport conning-style tower. A number of nineteenth-century churches lurk in streets behind the quay, including one belonging to the tiny **Turkish Orthodox Church of Panghia**, which split from the Greek

Orthodox Patriarchate in Fener in 1921, when invading Greek forces were striving to wrest control of western Anatolia. The church has found itself embroiled in the Ergenekon gang case (see p.332) and has been accused of being a focal point for ultra-nationalist activities.

## The Jewish Museum



The Ottoman Empire was long a safe-haven for Jews fleeing persecution, pogroms and massacres in Christian Europe. They formed a very sizeable minority in the city and many prospered, taking advantage of Muslim strictures against usury and the Ottoman gentlemen's disdain of trade and playing a significant role in bringing prosperity to Galata and its environs. The origins of the Zülfaris Synagogue on Meydanı Perçemli Sokak, which houses the **Jewish Museum** (Mon–Thurs 10am–4pm, Fri & Sun 10am–2pm; 5TL), can be traced back to 1671, though the present building was erected in the nineteenth century. It was founded to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the arrival of the Jews following their expulsion from Spain and contains a small but fascinating amount of material, much of it donated by local Jewish families such as the wealthy Kamondos.

Although the ethnography section of the museum is interesting enough, with the expected display of torah, menorah, traditional costume and the like, it is the collection of photographs (and accompanying storyboards) outlining the successful relationship between Jews and Turks over the centuries that commands attention. Unlike the Ottoman Christian minorities, the Jews never agitated for their own state, and in 1920 there were Jewish deputies in the fledgling Republic's National Assembly. In 1933, Atatürk invited Jewish academics from Nazi Germany to help his modernization programme, thus saving them from almost certain death. The otherwise admirable documentary *Desperate Hours* that plays in the upstairs gallery, glosses over the so-called Varlık Vergisi or "Wealth Tax" of 1942, unfairly levied on all Turkey's minorities – including Jews – and gives the impression that Britain was almost as responsible as the Nazis for the tragic Jewish losses in World War II.

# Tophane

Approached from Karaköy along Kemeraltı Caddesi (a waterfront stroll may look an attractive option on a map but is, in practice, impossible) or about a steep half kilometre downhill from İstiklal Caddesi, **Tophane** is a mixed area of run-down dockland dotted with venerable Ottoman buildings. Most notable of these is the **Kiliç Ali Paşa Camii**, an attractive mosque dating from 1580, designed towards the end of his life by the doyen of Ottoman architects, Sinan. Based on the Aya Sofya, it was built to honour a former Italian slave who, when freed, became both an admiral and a Muslim and was the only Ottoman admiral to come up smelling of roses after their disastrous defeat in the Battle of Lepanto in 1571. The Ottoman Baroque-style **Nusretiye Camii** (1822) was built by the Armenian architect Krikor Balian for Sultan Mahmut II. Called the "Victory Mosque", it celebrated Mahmut's success in crushing the by then out of hand janissaries in 1826. Between this mosque and the Bosphorus is a dense cluster of trendy *nargile* cafés (see box opposite).

### Nargile: hubble-bubble but no toil or trouble

To most Westerners, the smoking device known (amongst other names) as the water pipe, hubble-bubble or hookah is associated with the hashish-toking counter-culture of the 1960s. Either that or images of indolent, turbaned Muslims puffing away in some Eastern bazaar conjured up by romantic orientalist painters such as Delacroix. In today's İstanbul, however, the **nargile** (as the water pipe is known here) is part and parcel of everyday life for an increasing number of Turks. After decades of declining popularity, *nargile* smoking is undergoing a major resurgence – mainly amongst the young, the affluent and students. *Nargile* cafés are booming – some decked out in faux-Ottoman style, others über-contemporary – and the largest concentration is in Tophane, right behind the Nusretiye Camii and en route to the İstanbul Modern.

The *nargile* first became popular in İstanbul in the seventeenth century, having spread there from India via Iran and Arabia. The spoilsport sultan of the time, Murat IV, leant on by the religious authorities, prohibited its use, but to no avail – *nargile* smoking became a popular (though male-only) pursuit and really only began to lose its popularity with the advent of the Turkish Republic, when all things Ottoman were deemed old-fashioned and reactionary.

In Ottoman times, opium was often the smoker's preference; today, it is strictly tobacco – albeit the strong stuff – and arguments rage in Turkey over which is more harmful, cigarette or *nargile*? Visit a *nargile* café and you'll certainly inhale tobacco smoke (even if only passively), but that's the only "high" you'll get as alcohol isn't served. Although *nargile* pipes are popular tourist buys, *nargile* smoking is very much a Turkish thing to do, and you may find it rather intimidating to try one for the first time surrounded by local "old hands". Don't be put off, though – the whole point of *nargile* cafés is for people to come together, loll around on floor cushions and smoke, chat and chill. As for that rather strange, sweet smell, it could be the cherry-flavoured tobacco, or the strawberry, lemon, melon or chocolate. Yes, this is a traditional custom with a modern twist – bubble-gum flavour anyone?

## İstanbul Modern

Tophane is home to the city's contemporary art collection, **İstanbul Modern** (Tues–Sun 10am–6pm; 7TL, free Thurs 10am–2pm), set in a stylish revamped warehouse on the edge of the Bosphorus, just in front of the Nusretiye Camii and the *nargile* cafés. The museum's interior is all big, blank white walls and an exposed ventilation system, with views across the Bosphorus to the Topkapı Palace. A permanent exhibition in the upstairs gallery, to the right of the entrance, entitled "Modern Experiences – From Ottoman Empire to Turkish Republic", outlines the development of modern Turkish Art and places it in its historical and social context. Beginning with the adoption of Western styles in the Tanzimat (reform) period between 1839 and 1876 (mainly formal oils) it moves on to showcase the twin strands of art in the early Republic – state-sponsored "heroic realism" and the private artists influenced by modern Western art movements. A section entitled "War and Art" deals mainly with the emerging Republic's struggle with the West in the War of Independence, another showcases the abstract art that began to influence Turkish painters from the 1950s. Also on this floor are an expensive but well-regarded **café-restaurant** (see p.193) with a terrace right on the edge of the Bosphorus, and a gift shop selling books, posters and tasteful souvenirs. Downstairs, there's a reference library, a cinema showing arts and independent movies, plus plenty of space for the temporary exhibitions and intriguing still and video installations.

To reach the museum from Sultanahmet, take the tramway to the Tophane stop just west of Nusretiye Camii, from where it's a three-minute walk.



# Up the Golden Horn

North along the shore of the Golden Horn from Beyoğlu and Karaköy lies the poor neighbourhood of **Kasımpaş**. This industrial dockland area, in decline for many years, has the dubious distinction of being the cheapest property on the İstanbul Monopoly board. It is also the birthplace of Tayip Erdoğan, a working-class boy made good and now the charismatic if controversial leader of the ruling AKP (Justice and Development Party – see p.331) – which narrowly escaped closure by the country's constitutional court in 2008.

A couple of kilometres further up the Horn, **Hasköy** was for centuries a Jewish village, and it still boasts a number of synagogues, cemeteries and many old Jewish houses, though most of İstanbul's approximately 20,000 Jews have now moved further out of the city. It was also the location of an Ottoman naval shipyard and of a royal park, which was cultivated as a fruit orchard throughout Ottoman rule, and today is blessed with one (at least by İstanbul standards) unusual sight – the **Rahmi M. Koç Industrial Museum**.

Once a fetid stretch of virtually lifeless, polluted water (see box, p.84), the upper reaches of the Golden Horn have, in recent years, been the focus of major – and largely successful – environmental efforts to clean up this historic waterway. Fisherman now try their luck from the (shadeless) stretches of promenade that run along the water's edge – you can follow this from the model mania that is **Miniatürk**, in the district of **Sütlüce**, to the trendy **Santralıstanbul** cultural centre, a twenty-minute walk away to the north.

## Rahmi M. Koç Industrial Museum

The at Hasköy Cad 27 **Rahmi M Koç Müzesi** (Rahmi M. Koç Industrial Museum: Tues–Fri 10am–5pm, Sat & Sun 10am–7pm; 10TL, kids 5TL; ⓦwww.rmk-museum.org.tr) is a gem of a museum, and makes a welcome change from the standard Byzantine/Ottoman sights. Constructed in the eighteenth century as a factory for anchors and their chains, the museum's arching brickwork and spacious halls have been authentically restored. The work was carried out by Rahmi M. Koç, one of Turkey's most famous – and wealthiest – industrialists, to house his private collection of models, machines, vehicles and toys, originating from all over Turkey and Europe but mainly from Britain. The best time to visit is Saturday afternoon, when there are special exhibitions based around the collection of slot machines, the old Kadiköy–Moda tram and the history of flight.

Upstairs, the starboard main engine of the *Kalender* steam ferry, made in Newcastle upon Tyne in 1911 and decommissioned in the 1980s, is the main exhibit – press a button and you can see its pistons move. Downstairs are a number of old bikes, from penny-farthings to an early Royal Enfield motorbike complete with basket chair for side carriage. The model railway is disappointing in terms of moving parts; far better is the ship's bridge, reconstructed from a number of Turkish and British vessels of the 1920s to 1940s. All the instruments are explained in English, with sound effects and working parts, including an echo sounder, an early dimmer switch and a very loud alarm bell. The museum's

ongoing projects include raising the Australian navy's first submarine, sunk off Gallipoli in World War I. For those disinclined to contemplate the marvels of the Industrial Age, the *Café du Levant* in the museum grounds (closed Mon) is a good French bistro.

The other section of the museum, across the main road by the Golden Horn, contains a moored submarine (4.5TL) and a section of train track complete with a tiny old station. There's a street of period shops, from a chemist's complete with a set of old jars labelled "poison" to a ship's chandler's. Boy racers will love the selection of carefully restored cars covering the sublime (a 1965 Rolls Royce Silver Cloud) to the ridiculous (a 1985 Trabant). There is another restaurant here, right on the water's edge, the *Halat*, where a slice of chocolate tart and a cup of tea will set you back 18TL. The museum hosts a number of temporary exhibitions, so it's worth checking their website before you visit.

The easiest way to get here is to either catch **bus** #47/A from Eminönü, on the opposite side of the Horn, or the #54/H from Taksim. Alternatively, the **ferry** that runs between Eminönü and Eyüp stops at Kasımpaşa ferry terminal, from where it is a short walk to the museum.

## Miniatürk

Upstream in dull **Sütlüce**, on the north side of the monumental Halıç Bridge, is one of those attractions you'll either love or hate: **Miniatürk** (May–Oct Mon–Fri 9am–7pm, Sat & Sun 9am–9pm; Nov–April daily 9am–9pm; 10TL, under-9s free; Ⓦ www.miniaturk.com). Although it's set more or less on the banks of the Golden Horn, you could be anywhere, as the attraction is entirely surrounded by a high fence. On display here are over a hundred 1:25 scale models of some of Turkey's most impressive sights, spaced out along a 1.8-kilometre signed route. Forty-five of them are of attractions in İstanbul – from the relatively obscure (how about Sirkeci Post Office) through to the most famous (the Blue Mosque et al) – another 45 cover sights in Anatolia, including the Library of Celsius at Ephesus and Atatürk's mausoleum, the Anıtkabir, in Ankara, and there are also fifteen from former Ottoman dominions. Not all the well-detailed models are buildings – if you've ever wanted to see Cappadocia's fairy chimneys or the travertine cascades of Pamukkale in miniature, then this is the place to see them. Miniatürk's **Zafer Müzesi** (Victory Museum) celebrates Atatürk's military successes at Gallipoli in 1915 (see p.326) and during the Turkish War of Independence. Of interest to youngsters will be the giant chess set, maze and play area to the right of the entrance; more suitable for older kids is the go-kart track between the car park and the Golden Horn – it's a decent course and a five-minute spin will set you back 10TL.

To reach Miniaturk, take **bus** #47/A from Eminönü or the #54/H from Taksim.

## Santralıstanbul

Set in the attractively landscaped campus of Bilgi University, built on reclaimed industrial land, **Santralıstanbul** is a striking symbol of the new İstanbul. In the daytime, the major point of interest is the **Museum of Energy** (Tues–Sun 10am–8pm; free; Ⓦ www.santalistanbul.org), housed, appropriately enough, in an old power station. Between 1914 and its closure in 1983, this plant, the Silahtarağa, was the only electricity generating station in İstanbul. The interior is now a successful mix of the carefully preserved innards of the power plant and hi-tech wizardry. Best of all is the gigantic control room with its banks of dials,

gauges, switches and AEG metres, like the cockpit of some Flash Gordon-style 1930s spaceship. A walkway leads around the lower level of the cavernous interior and you can look down on the massive Sieman's engines. There's a thermal-imaging screen where you can gauge the heat of different parts of your body, whilst monitors set in the floor under metal grilles give a potted history of plants. The only drawback is that the explanations are in Turkish only. To the left of the entrance is an impressive exhibition space, which has hosted events ranging from retrospectives of contemporary Turkish art to the headscarf issue (see p.98).

The *SOS* café on the west side of the campus, housed in an aesthetically pleasing glass and steel building, is part student-canteen, part trendy eatery and dispenses the cheapest *lattes* in town, as well as a range of well-priced Turkish dishes – from *pide* to *köfte* – and international meals such as pasta. The open area to the south of the café is used for temporary events. *Otto-Santral*, a cool bar/bistro/venue in a converted storehouse attached to the power plant, is the place to while away the evening – though not cheap, the drinks are better value than in the trendy joints in Beyoğlu.

A free shuttle-bus runs from outside the AKM building on Taksim Square until 8pm; after that, you'll have to take the #47/A or #54/H bus and taxi-it back to the centre.

7

# Beşiktaş and Ortaköy

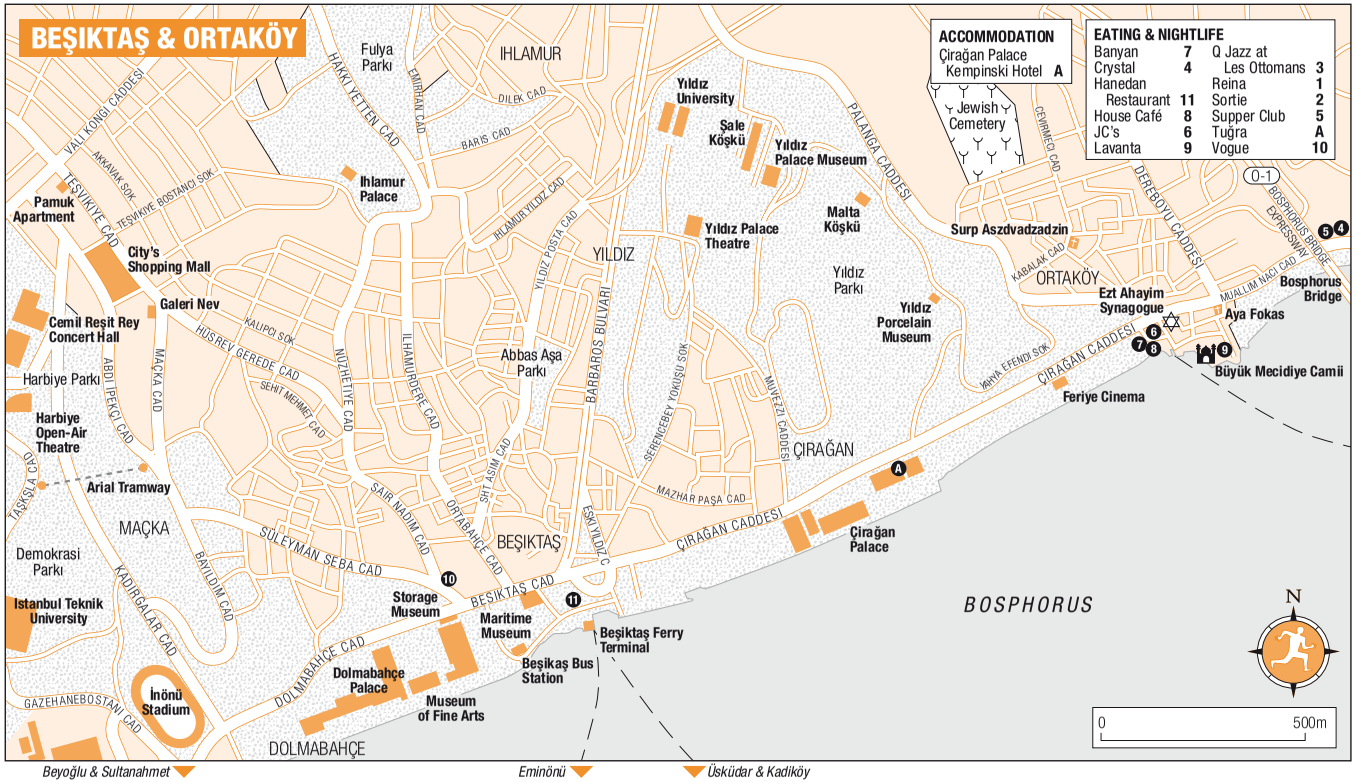


Beşiktaş and Ortaköy, the two suburbs fronting the Bosphorus between the tram terminus at Kabataş and the Bosphorus Bridge, are firmly part of the city, despite Ortaköy's former status as a village. **Beşiktaş** boasted its own royal palace, a hippodrome and an important church (all now long gone) in the Byzantine era, and developed into a major port under Ottoman rule; it remains an important ferry terminal today, and is the first stop on the famous Bosphorus Cruise (see p.160). The area's real draw, though, is its clutch of late nineteenth-century palaces and pavilions overlooking the strait – ornate, European-style residences for the last sultans of the decaying Ottoman Empire. Until recently, palaces aside, it was a little run-down, much frequented by students (Beşiktaş has the highest number of universities per square kilometre in the country) and other impecunious types, but the area's character is beginning to change, with a former tobacco warehouse being converted into a luxury hotel and a row of nineteenth-century houses transformed into a designer shopping street. **Ortaköy**, or the "Middle Village", a little further up the Bosphorus, verges on the twee, and its upmarket cafés and bars are usually packed with affluent young İstanbullus. The "village" is sandwiched between the horribly busy main coast road and the pretty waterfront, itself dominated by a splendidly ornate Ottoman Baroque mosque and the gigantic, yet sleek, bulk of the Bosphorus suspension bridge.

## Beşiktaş

Northeast of Taksim Square, along the Bosphorus, the busy suburb of **Beşiktaş** is one of the best-served transport hubs in the city. Most visitors are here to see the **Dolmabahçe Palace**, successor to Topkapı as the residence of the Ottoman sultans. However, it's worth spending a few more hours in the neighbourhood if you can, to visit the city's excellent **Maritime Museum**, as well as leafy **Yıldız Parkı** and the **Çırağan Palace**. It's also home to one of İstanbul's three major football teams (see p.238).

Concrete shopping centres and a sprawling fruit-and-vegetable market cluster around the main shore road and **ferry terminal**, in front of which stands the **bus station**. To get here, take bus #25/T or #40 from Taksim, or #28, #28/T or #30/D from Eminönü. Alternatively, the tram from Sultanahmet and Eminönü runs as far as Kabataş, as does the funicular down from Taksim Square, from where it's a little under 1km to the Dolmabahçe Palace; ferries run to and from Kadıköy and Üsküdar.


BEŞIKTAŞ & ORTAKÖY
ACCOMMODATION
Çirağan Palace Kempinski Hotel A
EATING & NIGHTLIFE
Banyan 7
Crystal 4
Hanedan Restaurant 11
House Café 8
JC's 6
Lavanta 9
Q Jazz at Les Ottomans 3
Reina 1
Sortie 2
Supper Club 5
Tuğra A
Vogue 10
Fulya Parkı
IHLAMUR
Yıldız University
Şale Köşkü
Yıldız Palace Museum
Jewish Cemetery
Ihlamur Palace
Yıldız Palace Theatre
Malta Köşkü
Surp Aszdvadzadzin
YILDIZ
Yıldız Parkı
ORTAKÖY
Pamuk Apartment
City's Shopping Mall
Galeri Nev
Cemil Reşit Rey Concert Hall
Abbas Aşa Parkı
Yıldız Porcelain Museum
Ezt Ahayim Synagogue
Bosphorus Bridge
Aya Fokas
Harbiye Parkı
Harbiye Open-Air Theatre
Büyük Mecidiye Camii
Feriye Cinema
Arial Tramway
MAÇKA
ÇIRAĞAN
Çirağan Palace
Demokrasi Parkı
BEŞIKTAŞ
Storage Museum
Maritime Museum
Beşiktaş Ferry Terminal
Beşikaş Bus Station
Istanbul Teknik University
İnönü Stadium
Dolmabahçe Palace
Museum of Fine Arts
DOLMABAHÇE
BOSPHORUS
Kıyıkışlası
0-1
0
500m
N
Beyoğlu & Sultanahmet
Eminönü
Üsküdar & Kadiköy

## The Dolmabahçe Palace

The **Dolmabahçe Sarayı** (Dolmabahçe Palace: daily except Mon & Thurs 9am–4pm; Selâmlik 15TL, Harem 10TL, combined ticket 20TL, camera 6TL) is the largest and most sumptuous of all the palaces on the Bosphorus, with an impressive six-hundred-metre-long waterside frontage. You're obliged to visit as part of a guided tour (2hr–2hr 30min), with up to 35 people in a group. Built in the nineteenth century by various members of the Balian family, it's an excessive display of ostentatious wealth suggesting that good taste suffered along with the fortunes of the Ottoman Empire. Indeed, critics see the palace's wholesale adoption of Western architectural forms as a last-ditch effort to muster some respect for a crumbling and defeated empire. Having said this, it's very popular with both Turkish visitors (not least because Atatürk lived here for several years) and foreigners.

The palace lies on the site of the harbour from which Mehmet the Conqueror launched his attack on Constantinople. The harbour was completely filled with stones on the order of Ahmet I at the beginning of the seventeenth century (*dolmabahçe* means "filled garden") and later became a shoreside grove of small palaces and pavilions, set aside for imperial use. These were demolished to make way for Sultan Abdül Mecid's new enterprise: a palace to replace Topkapı as the imperial residence of the Ottoman sultans. It was built by Armenian architect Karabet Balian and his son Nikoğos between 1843 and 1856 and, as is often pointed out on the guided tour, everything you see coloured yellow is **gold**. The decor is a virtual assault on the senses, but it's worth trying to ignore the worst of the excesses and concentrate on the (slightly) less vulgar palace highlights, such as the inlaid parquet floors, translucent pink alabaster imperial baths or the famous double staircase with crystal balusters.

The palace is divided into a **selâmlik** and **harem** by the 36-metre-high **throne room** (double the height of the rest of the rooms), held up by 56 elaborate columns. The ceremonies conducted here were accompanied by an orchestra playing European marches and watched by the women of the *harem* through the *kafes*, grilles behind which women were kept hidden even in the days of Westernization and reform. The four-tonne chandelier in the throne room, one of the largest ever made, with 750 bulbs, was a present from Queen Victoria. Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, died here in his private apartment in 1938.

In the east wing of the palace, the former apartments of the heir to the throne house the **Resim ve Heykel Müzesi** (Museum of Fine Arts: Wed–Sun 10am–4pm; free), usually entered from the Kaymakamlık building, which used to house the palace staff, around 300m further along the main road from the Dolmabahçe entrance. The best of the collection dates from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and gives an intriguing insight into the lifestyle and attitudes of the late Ottoman Turks. Highlights are the works of Osman Hamdi Bey (1842–1910) – the first Ottoman Muslim painter to have his work displayed abroad – including *Woman with Mimosas*, and the wonderful painting of a mosque doorway by Osman Hamdi's pupil, Şevret Daş.

## The Storage Museum

Housed in the former kitchens of the Dolmabahçe Palace, the **Depo Müzesi** (Storage Museum: daily except Mon 9am–5pm; 2TL, camera 6TL) is situated at the eastern end of the palace but has its own entrance on Dolmabahçe Caddesi. The museum contains a staggering 42,000 different items, all of them

from the palace. The mother-of-pearl inlaid *hamam* slippers, Singer sewing machines, cast-iron AEG fans and delicate Limoges-ware tea sets are just some of the relatively mundane objects that help further our understanding of life in the palace. The interior of the kitchens has been attractively restored and the objects well displayed – look out for the stereoscope made in London's Pall Mall and the most contemporary item on display, the Ericsson telephone switchboard, so essential for communications in the gargantuan palace.



## The Maritime Museum

The worthwhile **Deniz Müzesi** (Maritime Museum: daily except Wed & Thurs 9am–12.30pm & 1.30–5pm; 3TL) on Barbaros Hayrettin Paşa Iskelesı Sok, off Beşiktaş Caddesi, is divided between two buildings: the one facing the water houses seagoing craft, while the other, on Cezayir Caddesi, is devoted to the maritime history of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic. Most of the labels are in Turkish, but the best of the exhibits – such as the enormous wooden figureheads depicting tigers and swans, and the display of items from Atatürk's yachts, the *Savarona* and *Ertugrul*– need little explanation. There's even a model of the ship that contributed to the Ottomans entering World War I – the *Sultan Osman 1*. The ship was paid for by public subscription and built in Britain – but was never delivered, due to Britain's fear that the Ottomans were already committed to Germany. Instead, the British kept it, renaming it the HMS *Agincourt*, and the subsequent public outrage gave the "Young Turk" leadership just the excuse they needed for entering the war as Germany's allies.

Next door, the exhibition continues with a collection of caiques that were used to row the sultans to and from their homes along the Bosphorus. The oarsmen – the *Bostanci* – reputedly barked like dogs whilst they rowed so as not to overhear the sultans talking. The largest of these caiques, dating from 1648, needed an incredible 144 oarsmen to power it. The lovely mother-of-pearl inlay of the sultan's kiosk here can be viewed from above via a purpose-built walkway.

## Çırağan Palace

A ten-minute walk east along busy Çırağan Caddesi, sumptuous **Çırağan Palace**, with 300m of marble facade facing the shore, was built as a palace when Sultan Abdülmecid decided to move his official residence from Dolmabahçe in 1855. It was completed in 1874, during the reign of Abdülaziz, and it was here that Abdülaziz was either murdered or committed suicide – the cause of death was never established. Murat V was later imprisoned in the palace after being deposed by his brother. Following a period of abandonment, Çırağan housed the Turkish parliament for two years from 1908 before a fire reduced it to a blackened shell. It was restored in 1991 to its present magnificence as İstanbul's foremost luxury hotel, the *Çırağan Palace Kempinski* (see p.184).

Like Dolmabahçe, Çırağan was designed along the lines of a European palace, but Arabic touches were added on the orders of Abdülaziz – such as the honeycomb stalactites decorating the windows. Unfortunately, the modern block of the *Kempinski* slightly mars the view of the palace from the Bosphorus, but the *Gazebo* restaurant provides a magnificent setting for a traditional afternoon tea, while *Tuğra* (see p.202) is the place for a grand Ottoman night out.

A bridge crossing Çırağan Caddesi connects the palace with Yıldız Parkı and allowed the *harem* women private access to the park – on the odd occasion they were given permission to enter, of course.

# Yıldız Parkı

**Yıldız Parkı** (daily: summer 9am–6pm; winter 9am–5.30pm; free), a vast wooded area opposite the Çırağan Palace and dotted with mansions, pavilions, lakes and gardens, was the centre of the Ottoman Empire for thirty years during the reign of Abdülhamid II. The buildings in and around the park constitute **Yıldız Palace**, a collection of structures in the old Ottoman style that are a total contrast to the Dolmabahçe Palace. Most of the pavilions date from the reign of Abdülaziz, but it was Abdülhamid – a reforming sultan whose downfall was brought about by his intense paranoia – who transformed Yıldız into a small city and powerbase.

Its superb hillside location makes the park one of the most popular places in İstanbul for city-dwellers thirsting for fresh air and open spaces, and on public holidays it's always crowded. The palace buildings are a fifteen-minute walk up through the park from the southern entrance on Çırağan Caddesi. If you don't fancy the steep climb, you can take any bus or minibus from the main square in Beşiktaş by the ferry terminal and up Barbaros Bulvarı. Get off just after the former British Council building (opposite the *Conrad Hotel*) and follow the signs to "Yıldız Üniversitesi" and "Şehir Müzesi" to the right. Of the many buildings in the park, only the Yıldız Palace Museum and the Şale Köşkü are open to the public, though it's easy enough to wander around the outside of the other pavilions, each with marvellous terraces and panoramic views of the Bosphorus.

## The park buildings

The most important surviving building in the park is the **Şale Köşkü** (daily except Mon & Thurs 9.30am–5pm, Oct–Feb until 4pm; obligatory guided tours 4TL, camera 6TL). Like the Dolmabahçe Palace, it was designed partly by the Armenian Balian brothers and partly by the Italian D'Aronco. The first of the pavilion's three separate sections was modelled on a Swiss chalet, while the other two were built to receive Kaiser Wilhelm II on his first and second state visits, in 1889 and 1898. The inside of the *köşkü* belies its peeling exterior – the most impressive room, the **Ceremonial Hall**, takes up the greater part of the third section, with a Hereke carpet so big (approximately 400 square metres) that part of a wall was knocked down to install it. It was here, following the liberalizing Tanzimat reforms of 1839, that the sultan met his ministers to discuss matters of state. In the attractive dining room, at the top of the central stairway in the central section, the dining chairs were carved by the reclusive Abdülhamid himself.

The **Yıldız Sarayı Müzesi** (Yıldız Palace Museum: daily except Mon 9.30pm–6pm; 5TL) below the *Şale Köşkü* is housed in Abdülhamid's converted carpentry workshop, and exhibits items and furniture from throughout the palace. Whilst not in their original setting, there are some exquisite porcelain pieces, giant vases and even some of the joinery produced by the sultan himself. Further down is a relaxing **café**, the *Kır Kahvesi*, where you can enjoy the shade provided by the towering chestnut, beech, linden and plane trees. Alternatively, the **Malta Köşkü**, built in 1870 and once used to imprison Sultan Abdülhamid's brother, Murat (on Abdülhamid's orders) is a reasonably priced restaurant/café. Set in the northeast corner of the park is the **Yıdız Porcelain Factory**, established here in 1890 to produce tableware for the palace. The pottery is still functioning, and the designs sticks very closely to the ornate late nineteenth-century European styles favoured by the last Ottoman sultans. The attached gift shop stocks a range of the factory's produce, and there's an adjoining café with good views over the park.

# Ortaköy

The character of **Ortaköy**, a former Bosphorus backwater on the eastern side of Yıldız Parkı, 1km from Beşiktaş, has been hijacked, with expensive restaurants and swanky theme-bars springing up in even the tiniest of fishermen's cottages. The suburb runs north under the transcontinental **Bouazıçı Köprüsü** (Bosphorus Bridge), completed in time to celebrate the Turkish Republic's 50th anniversary in 1973 – the area just beyond the 1.5-kilometre-long bridge is home to some of the city's glitziest clubs. To get to Ortaköy, take a #40 bus from Taksim, or the #30 from Eminönü. Alternatively you can take the **tram** from Sultanahmet, or the funicular from Taksim Square, to

▲ Büyük Mecidiye Camii

Kabataş, then catch the #22/E to Ortaköy – or catch a bus or **ferry** to Beşiktaş and walk (about 15min).

When Ortaköy was just a tiny fishing village, university students and teachers used to gather here to sip tea and discuss weighty topics. It's a time remembered in the name of the Sunday *entel*, or "intellectual", **market**, a crowded affair held on the waterfront square, which sells all kinds of arts and crafts. There are also daily market stalls trading in silver jewellery and sunglasses on the waterfront, or **Ortaköy boardwalk** as it's rather pretentiously known. This is also the location of the attractive Ottoman Baroque **Büyük Mecidiye Camii**, built in 1855. Right on the water's edge, it is endlessly recycled in photographs juxtaposed with the towering Bosphorus Bridge in the background.

Örtaköy was, and to some extents remains, a cosmopolitan and tolerant area of the city. Perched high above the waterfront is the Armenian church of **Surp Aszdvadzadzin**, built between 1661 and 1684. Plain on the exterior, the barrel-vaulted, Neoclassical interior is lavishly decorated, and the gold-gilded altar is monumental. Services are still held here on Sunday mornings. Back down the hill and running parallel to the Bosphorus, the main street, Muallim Naci Caddesi, boasts the attractive Greek Orthodox church of **Aya Fokas** (St Phocas) constructed in 1854, and the **Ezt Ahayim** synagogue.

Just to the left of the mosque is a small jetty from where short cruises head up the Bosphorus as far as the Fatih Bridge, touching on both the European and Asian sides en route (3TL). Cruises also head in the other direction, down to Kız Kulesi (see p.152) off Üsküdar (daily 1pm, 3pm & 5pm; 7TL).

# 8

# Asian İstanbul

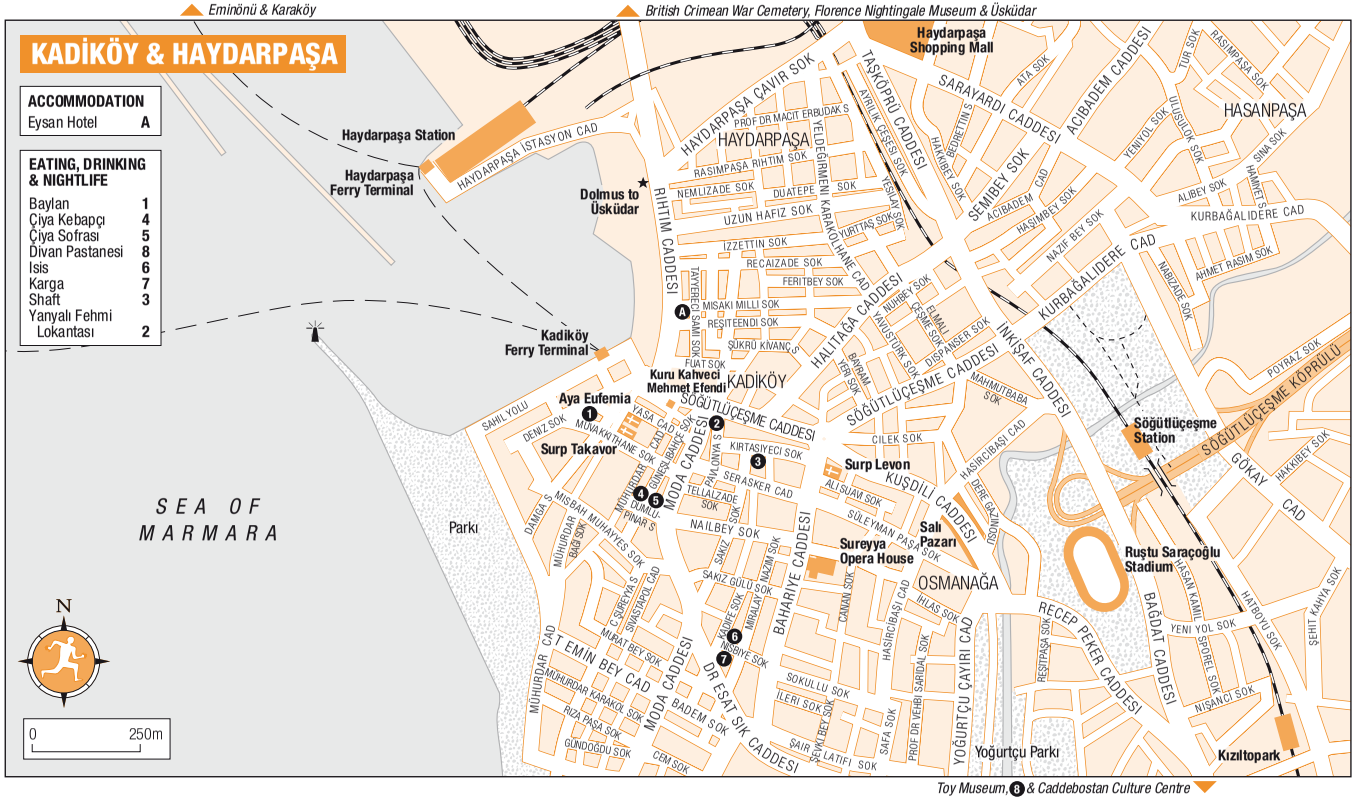
With so much to see and do in historic old İstanbul and good-time Beyoğlu, most visitors put a trip across the Bosphorus to the Asian side of the city well down their list of priorities – which is a shame, as even a quick visit will give you a more rounded feel of how this great metropolis ticks. **Kadıköy** has a sprinkling of minor sights and offers some decent opportunities for shopping, eating and drinking, whilst it's northern neighbour, **Haydarpaşa**, is worth a wander for its impressive early twentieth-century station, the **Crimean War Cemetery** and the colossal Selimiye Barracks, home to the **Florence Nightingale Museum**. The choice of **Üsküdar** as the exit point of the Marmaray railway tunnel linking the European and Asian sides of the city (see p.31) should shortly wake it from its conservative slumber – in the meantime, there are a number of worthwhile **mosques** to visit (including a couple by the master architect Sinan), the landmark **Kız Kulesi** lies just offshore, and you can eat at some of İstanbul's best traditional restaurants.

Despite appearances to the contrary, **Greek colonists** founded a city, Chalcedon, near present-day Kadıköy as early as 680 BC – some twenty years before the colony across the straits that became Byzantium, then Constantinople and finally İstanbul. Üsküdar was founded by that mercurial Athenian statesmen-adventurer, Alcibiades, in 409 BC, and was known as Chrysopolis. The construction of the Marmaray tunnel in Üsküdar has revealed both **archaic** and **Byzantine**-era ruins – what else will turn up remains to be seen.

Regular **ferries** (daily 6am–midnight; around 20min) run to Kadıköy (from Eminönü and Karaköy), Haydarpaşa (Karaköy) and Üsküdar (Eminönü). Buses #12 and #12/A run at regular intervals between Üsküdar and Kadıköy, stopping at both Selimiye and Marmara University.

## Kadıköy

The suburb of **Kadıköy** makes for a surprisingly enjoyable outing from the European side of the city – despite a lack of notable sights. It's a lively place, with a range of decent shops, restaurants, bars and cinemas. One of the area's charms is its local feel – hardly surprising as, unlike Sultanahmet or Beyoğlu, most of the people out and about here are residents. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, when the introduction of steam-driven ferries made commuting across the Bosphorus feasible, Kadıköy became a popular residential area for foreign businesspeople and wealthy Greeks and Armenians, whose


Eminönü & Karaköy
British Crimean War Cemetery, Florence Nightingale Museum & Üsküdar
KADİKÖY & HAYDARPAŞA
ACCOMMODATION
Eysan Hotel A
EATING, DRINKING & NIGHTLIFE
Baylan 1
Çiya Kebapçı 4
Çiya Sofrası 5
Divan Pastanesi 8
Isis 6
Karga 7
Shaft 3
Yanyalı Fehmi Lokantası 2
Haydarpaşa Station
Haydarpaşa Ferry Terminal
Dolmus to Üsküdar
Kadiköy Ferry Terminal
Haydarpaşa Shopping Mall
HAYDARPAŞA
HASANPAŞA
KADİKÖY
OSMANAĞA
Kuru Kahveci Mehmet Efendi
Aya Eufemia
Surp Takavor
Surp Levon
Salı Pazarı
Sureyya Opera House
Söğütlüçeşme Station
Ruştu Saraçoğlu Stadium
Kızıltopark
Yoğurtçu Parkı
Parkı
SEA OF MARMARA
Eminönü
Toy Museum, 8 & Caddebostan Culture Centre
0 250m

most visible legacy are the **churches** southeast of the ferry terminal. There's a scattering of older constructions in amongst the concrete: look out for the tall, narrow curves of the cream Art Deco-style **Kuru Kahveci Mehmet Efendi building**, home to the famous purveyor of Turkish Coffee, and the beautifully restored **Surreya Opera House** on Bahariye Caddesi; dating back to 1927, its beautiful Neoclassical facade is adorned with relief-work pilasters, cherubs and classical-style theatre masks (the opera and ballet season runs Sept–May; see p.215).

The best place for shopping in Kadıköy is **Bahariye Caddesi**, a right turn off Söğütlüceşme Caddesi, the steep, wide street leading uphill from the ferry terminal. These two streets have their own tram, a grittier version of İstiklal Caddesi's; indeed, the area bounded by Söğütlüceşme Caddesi to the north, Bahariye and Emın Bey *caddesi*s to the east and south and the Bosphorus waterfront to the west is becoming a mini-Beyoğlu, with a similar mix of alternative-clothing stores, bookshops and bric-a-brac shops dotted amongst the cafés and restaurants spilling out onto jam-packed pedestrianized streets. The **Salı Pazarı** (Tues Market) on Kuşdili Sokak is well worth a look, despite the occasionally noxious smell from the nearby river. On Tuesdays, the market is mainly cheap clothes and fruit and veg, but on Sundays the area becomes a *bit pazarı* (flea market) with antiques, jewellery and secondhand furniture.

Kadıköy is home to Turkey's wealthiest football club, **Fenerbahçe** (see p.239), who reached the quarter-finals of the European Champions League in 2008. Their impressive stadium, the Rüştü Saraçoğlu, the largest club ground in the country, lies at the foot of the hill 400m east of Bahariye Caddesi. Running along its eastern side is the main drag known as **Bağdat Caddesi**, once part of the old silk route from China. It's of little interest today except as a place to pose, and as a place to buy the clothes to pose in.

## Aya Eufemia, Surp Takavor and Surp Levon

The Greek Orthodox church of **Aya Eufemia**, undergoing internal renovation at the time of writing, goes back to the Byzantine era, though the present structure dates from 1830. Like all the nineteenth-century churches in the city, it is set in a walled and gated garden-compound, so you'll need to ring the bell for entry. Built on a cruciform plan, it stands on the busy but pleasantly pedestrianized intersection of Muvakkithane and Yasa *sokaks*. Also on Muvakkithane Sokak is the early nineteenth-century Armenian Orthodox church of **Surp Takavor** (St Takavor), with a Byzantine-inspired scallop-edged dome. Further inland, at the northern end of Bahariye Caddesi, the immaculately kept Armenian Catholic church of **Surp Levon** (St Levon) is the only one of the city's fourteen Armenian Catholic churches on the Asian side. A rendered stone structure with a square belfry, it was built in 1911 after a *firman* (authorization) was obtained from Sultan Abdül Hamit II.

## The Toy Museum

Established in 2005 in a lovely nineteenth-century wooden villa – which, until the 1950s, housed one of the city's most famous toyshops – the **Toy Museum** (Tues–Fri 9am–6pm, Sat & Sun 9am–10pm; 6TL), on Dr. Zeki Zeren Sokak in nearby Göztepe, is the brainchild of poet Sunay Akin. It exhibits some four thousand toys on four floors, the oldest dating back two hundred years. Although there are some century-old German-made porcelain dolls on display, and a Barbie in her first employment role as an air stewardess, the exhibits are

mainly male-orientated and-themed, with rooms devoted to trains, space toys and soldiers amongst others. Much, but not all, of the collection is foreign, and there are examples of handmade dolls from Anatolia, a whirling-dervish puppet, and products of the Eyüp Sultan toy factory. The museum is best reached on a #10, #10/B or #10/S bus.

# Haydarpaşa

Across the bay to the north of Kadıköy, **Haydarpaşa** is dominated by the massive **Selimiye Barracks**, built in the early nineteenth century to house the new, Western-style army created to bring the power of the corrupt janissary corps to an end but now worth a visit for the **Florence Nightingale Museum**. Opposite, on Selimiye Camii Sokak, is the **Selimiye Camii**, constructed, along with the nearby *hamam*, for the use of the barracks' soldiers. Almost rivalling the barracks for sheer size is the main building of **Marmara University**, designed by Raimondo D'Aronco and notable for its quirky clock towers, though another superlative, the **Karaca Ahmet Mezarlığı**, the largest Muslim graveyard in İstanbul, makes a more tangible destination. A sprawling place shadowed by ancient cypress trees, thought to have been founded in the mid-fourteenth century and now with an estimated one million graves, it's a ten-minute walk away on Tıbbiye Caddesi, in the direction of Üsküdar, or you can catch any number of buses, including the useful #12 and #12/A. The waterfront area is adorned by the imposing, Germanic bulk of **Haydarpaşa station**, fronted by the attractive ferry terminal building designed by Vedat Tak, the architect responsible for the Central Post Office building near Sirkeci station.

## Haydarpaşa station

Designed by the German architects Otto Ritter and Helmuth Cuno, the historic mainline **Haydarpaşa train station** was completed in 1908 as part of Germany's grandiose plans for a Berlin to Baghdad railway and presented to Sultan Abdül Hamit II as a present by Kaiser Wilhelm II. Perched right on the edge of the Bosphorus (it was actually partially built on 1100 pillars sunk into the water), the palace-like building is an impressive sight as you cross from Europe to Asia by ferry. A feature of the station is its multitude of beautiful stained-glass windows, which suffuse the cavernous interior with soft, pastel-coloured light. Germany's defeat in World War I ensured that the railway never served its intended purpose – linking Germany with the oil fields of the Persian Gulf and its African colonies. For the moment, the trains continue to roll into Haydarpaşa, bringing fresh batches of wide-eyed immigrants from rural Anatolia for a new start in the big city, but the transport system restructuring that threatens Sirkeci will also undoubtedly make Haydarpaşa redundant.

## The British Crimean War Cemetery

Directly north of the station, between the sea and Tıbbiye Caddesi, is the Marmara University and the **British Crimean War Cemetery** (daily 7am–7pm), a beautifully kept spot maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Given as gift to Britain by the Ottoman authorities at the time of

▲ Tomb of the British Crimean War Cemetery

the Crimean War, it is shaded by cypress, plane and ornamental firs and shelters the dead of the Crimean and the two world wars. To find it, turn off Tıbbiye Caddesi into Burhan Felek Caddesi, between the university building and the emergency entrance to the GATA military hospital. The largest monument is an obelisk, with four wreath-holding angels at each corner, "raised by Queen Victoria and her people in 1857". The cemetery is in two parts, with the obelisk and various inscribed gravestones in the first, smaller part, and a more extensive graveyard in the larger landscaped area beyond. The war that caused the death of the soldiers and civilians interred here was pointless (less than sixty years later, Britain was fighting against, rather than with, the Ottoman Turks and alongside – at least until the Bolshevik Revolution – Russia), which makes the inscriptions on the gravestones and markers even more poignant.

## The Florence Nightingale Museum

A few-minutes' walk northeast of the university, along Kavak Iskele Caddesi, the imposing **Selimiye Barracks** (closed to the public), whose northwest wing was used as a hospital by the British during the Crimean War (1854–56), houses the **Florence Nightingale Museum** (Mon–Fri 9am–5pm; by appointment only; free). Florence Nightingale (see box opposite) lived and worked in the northern tower, where she reduced the death toll among patients from twenty percent to two percent, and established universally accepted principles of modern nursing. The museum contains two of her famous lamps, and you can see the rooms where she lived and worked. Whether you think it's worth the effort of faxing a photocopy of the identity page of your passport, desired visiting date and time and telephone number to the museum's military guardians (☎0216/553 1009 or 0216/3107929) at least 24 hours before your intended visit (and awaiting the reply), depends on your level of interest in the great woman. Most visitors find the monumental barracks and the whole rigmarole of dealing with the Turkish military (who lead the tour) at least as fascinating as the museum itself.

## Florence Nightingale: the Lady of the Lamp

The **Crimean War**, fought between Russia and the ailing Ottoman Empire and its allies (Britain and France) between 1854 and 1856 was a particularly gruelling one. When news reports reached Britain of the appalling suffering of British troops in the campaign – caused largely by poor living conditions and totally inadequate medical care – public indignation led to a team of nurses, headed by **Florence Nightingale**, being sent to the military hospital at the Selimiye Barracks (see opposite) in Scutari (modern Üsküdar) on the Asian side of the Bosphorus. Although Nightingale had spotted the connection between hygiene and health and had concentrated mainly on cleaning the wards and medical equipment (such as it was), over 4000 soldiers died in her first winter. Despite her best efforts – she is said to have walked 6km of hospital ward each evening, her famous lamp in hand – her ministrations could not prevent **typhus**, **cholera**, **typhoid** and **dysentery** rifling through the hospital. The following year, the sewers of the hospital were overhauled and better ventilation introduced – massively reducing infection rates. Nonetheless, ten times more troops died from disease than battle wounds in the Crimean campaign.

A strict Unitarian, Nightingale saw herself on a God-given mission to alleviate suffering. Her dedication revolutionized health care and helped establish the universally accepted principles of modern nursing. She wrote a book on nursing, and in 1860 set up a training school for nurses at St Thomas' Hospital in London (now part of King's College London). She became a legend in Victorian Britain and was immortalized in Henry Longfellow's poem *Santa Filomena*:

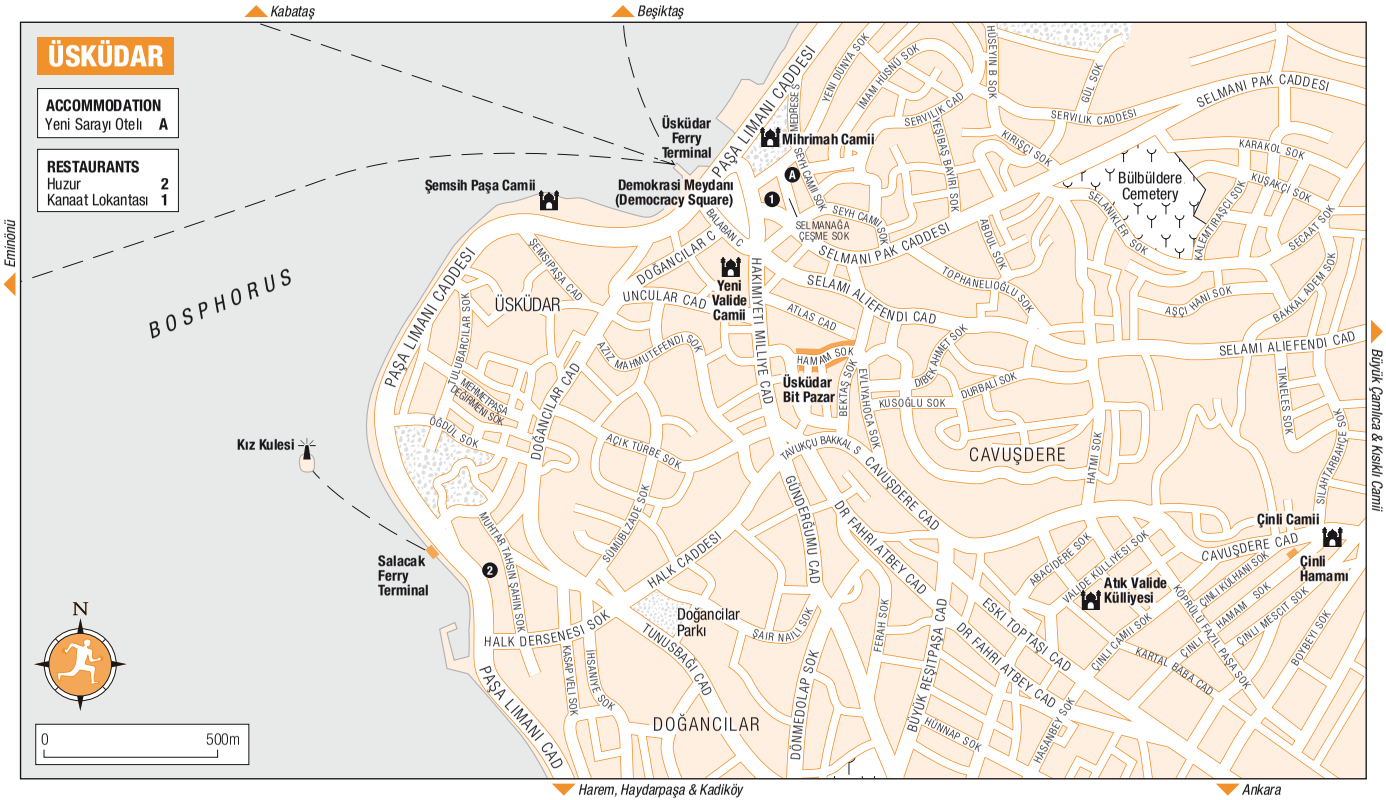
**Lo, in that hour of misery**
**A lady with a lamp I see**
**Pass through the shimmering gloom**
**And flit from room to room**
**Florence Nightingale**



# Üsküdar

There's plenty of evidence of religious conservatism in **Üsküdar** (a corruption of "Scutari" – the name used for what was a separate town in the late Byzantine era), particularly in the dress of its inhabitants. The area has been characterized by wholesale migration from the more Islamic regions of Anatolia and has long been a centre of Islamic mystical sects. Although there are some fine imperial mosques in and around the suburb, modern Üsküdar is primarily renowned as a shopping centre. It has an abundance of street stalls selling fresh produce, particularly fish and vegetables, and innumerable family-run supermarkets that stock obscure varieties of Anatolian cheeses. Secondhand furniture and ornaments are on offer at the **Üsküdar bit pazarı** (flea market) in Büyük Hamam Sokak, and there are also some reasonable jewellery and clothes shops. Along the quayside, in an area known as **Salacak**, are some good pavement cafés and bars, offering fantastic views of Topkapı Palace and Old İstanbul.

The most obvious mosque is **İskele** or **Mihrimah Camii**, opposite the ferry terminal on İskele Meydanı. This sits on a high platform, fronted by an immense covered porch that is the perennial haunt of old men in knitted hats complaining about the changing times while they peruse the work on the tunnel below. Designed by Mimar Sinan for Mihrimah, daughter of Süleyman the Magnificent and built in 1547–48, this is the only Ottoman mosque with three semi-domes (rather than two or four), a result of the requirements of a difficult site against the hillside behind.


ÜSKÜDAR
ACCOMMODATION
Yeni Sarayı Otelı A
RESTAURANTS
Huzur 2
Kanaat Lokantası 1
Kabataş
Beşiktaş
Eminönü
Harem, Haydarpaşa & Kadıköy
Ankara
Büyük Çamlıca & Kısıklı Camii
BOSPHORUS
Üsküdar Ferry Terminal
Mihrimah Camii
Şemsih Paşa Camii
Demokrasi Meydanı (Democracy Square)
Yeni Valide Camii
Üsküdar Bit Pazar
Bülbüldere Cemetery
Kız Kulesi
Salacak Ferry Terminal
Doğancılar Parkı
ÜSKÜDAR
CAVUŞDERE
DOĞANCILAR
Çinli Camii
Çinli Hamamı
Atık Valide Külliyesi
PAŞA LIMANI CADDESI
SELMANI PAK CADDESI
SELAMI ALIEFENDI CAD
CAVUŞDERE CAD
HALK CADDESI
HALK DERSENESI SOK
PAŞA LIMANI CAD
DOĞANCILAR CAD
HAKIMIYETI MILLIYE CAD
DR FAHRI ATBEY CAD
ESKI TOPTAŞI CAD
SERVILIK CADDESI
SERVILIK CAD
SEYH CAMI SOK
SELMANAGA ÇEŞME SOK
TOPHANELIOĞLU SOK
ATLAS CAD
HAMAM SOK
DIBEK AHMET SOK
DURBALI SOK
KUSOĞLU SOK
TAVUKÇU BAKKAL S
GÜNDERGÜMU CAD
DÖNMEDOLAP SOK
BÜYÜK REŞITPAŞA CAD
HÜNNAP SOK
HASANBEY SOK
FERAH SOK
SAIR NAILI SOK
TUNUSBAĞI CAD
KASAP VELI SOK
IHSANIYE SOK
SUMBÜLZADE SOK
MÜFTAR TAHSIN ŞAHIN SOK
AÇIK TÜRBE SOK
AZIZ MAHMUTEFENDI SOK
ŞEHSIPAŞA CAD
UNCULAR CAD
BILABAN C
ABDUL SOK
HÜSEYIN B SOK
GÜL SOK
KIRIŞÇI SOK
KARAKOL SOK
KUŞAKÇI SOK
SEÇAAT SOK
KALEMIRAŞÇI SOK
SELANIKLER SOK
ASÇI HANI SOK
BAKKAL ADEM SOK
TIKNELES SOK
SILAHTARBAHÇE SOK
ABAGIDERE SOK
VALIDE KÜLLIYESI SOK
ÇINLI KÜLHANI SOK
ÇINLI HAMAM SOK
ÇINLI MESCIT SOK
KÖPRÜLÜ FAZIL PAŞA SOK
KARTAL BABA CAD
BOYBEYI SOK
HATMI SOK
MEHMETPAŞA TEŞRIFATÇI SOK
ULUBÜRCÜLAR SOK
ÖĞÜDÜL SOK
N
0
500m

Directly across the main square, Demokrasi Meydanı (Democracy Square), the **Yeni Valide Camii**, built between 1708 and 1710 by Ahmet III in honour of his mother, is most easily identified by the Valide Sultan's green, birdcage-like tomb, whose meshed roof was designed to keep birds out while allowing rain in to water the garden tomb below (now rather untidily overgrown). There's an attractive *şadırvan* (ablutions fountain) in the courtyard; the grilles of its cistern are highly wrought, their pattern echoed in the stone carvings above.

One of the most attractive mosques in Üsküdar is the **Çinili Camii**, or Tiled Mosque, which dates from 1640. To get there on foot, take Hakimiyeti Milliye Caddesi out of the centre and turn left into Çavuşdere Caddesi; the mosque is on the right, after the Çavuşdere fruit and veg market. The tiles are mainly blues and turquoise, but there's a rare shade of green to be found in the *mihrab*. Below the mosque, in the same street, is the beautifully restored **Çinili Hamamı** (men 8am–10pm, women 8am–8pm; 30TL), which retains its original central marble stones for massage and acres of marble revetments. It's an extremely clean *hamam*, the pride of its workers, and was voted one of the ten best in the country by the popular Turkish daily newspaper, *Hüriyet*.

The **Atık Valide Külliyesi** is just a short walk from Çinili Camii: head down Çinili Hamamı Sokak and you'll find the mosque on the right. Dating from 1583, the complex is a work of the master architect Mimar Sinan, built for Nur Banu, wife of Selim II and mother of Murat III. The mosque courtyard, surrounding an attractive *şadırvan*, is a colonnaded gem. Worth inspecting inside are the underside of the wooden galleries that run around three sides of the prayer hall interior, which are beautifully painted, and the İznik tiles covering the *mihrab*.

Back on the waterfront, the **Şemsih Paşa Camii** (closed for restoration at the time of writing) rivals Örtaköy's Mecidiye Camii as the most picturesquely situated mosque in the city. It's considerably older, though (built in 1580 by the great Sinan), and its simple, domed structure looks glorious when seen from the water.

From Üsküdar's main square, Demokrasi Meydanı, minibuses to Ümraniye run past the foot of **Büyük Çamlıca**, the highest hill on the Asian side. If you get off at Kısıklı Camii you can walk up Kısıklı–Büyük Çamlıca Caddesi, turning right just before the *Büyük Çamlıca Et Lokantası* restaurant to reach the park – a walk of fifteen minutes or so. The effort is rewarded by refreshingly cooler temperatures and by spectacular views of the Bosphorus and the European shore. The **café** on the hill (daily 9am–midnight) has been tastefully refurbished.

To the south of Üsküdar on an island in the Bosphorus is the small, white **Kız Kulesi** (Maiden's Tower), also known as Leander's Tower. Many myths are associated with it: in one, a princess, who was prophesied to die from a snake bite, came here to escape her fate, only to succumb to it when a serpent was delivered to her retreat in a basket of fruit. The tower also featured in the 1999 James Bond film, *The World Is Not Enough*. It's now a **museum** (daily except Mon noon–7pm; free), doubling as an expensive restaurant in the evening (daily 7.30pm–1am). The Kız Kulesi can be reached from Salacak (on the main coast road between Üsküdar and Harem) by **boat**; first boats depart at 7.15am, last returns at 1.30am. There are also boats from Ortaköy (daily 1pm, 3pm & 5pm), returning after an hour and a half. In the evening, a boat leaves from Kabataşat at 8.30pm, returning at 11.15pm.

9

# The Bosphorus and the Black Sea resorts

One of the world's most eulogized stretches of water, the **Bosphorus** is a source of pride for İstanbul's residents and of admiration for its visitors. The thirty-kilometre strait divides Europe and Asia and connects the Marmara and Black seas, its width varying from 660 to 4500 metres, and its depth from fifty to several hundred metres. Its name derives from the Greek myth of Io, lover of Zeus, whom the god transformed into a cow to conceal her from his jealous wife Hera. She plunged into the straits to escape a gadfly, hence Bosphorus, or "Ford of the Cow".

Around fifty thousand cargo ships, oil tankers and ocean liners pass through the strait each year, while for residents and visitors alike, the Bosphorus remains İstanbul's most important transport artery. The passenger ferries and sea buses that weave their way up and down from shore to shore provide one of the city's real highlights: along the way are imperial palaces and ancient fortresses interspersed with affluent waterfront suburbs, which become increasingly more like real villages the further north you head, and wooden *yalis* (waterside mansions; see box, p.164).

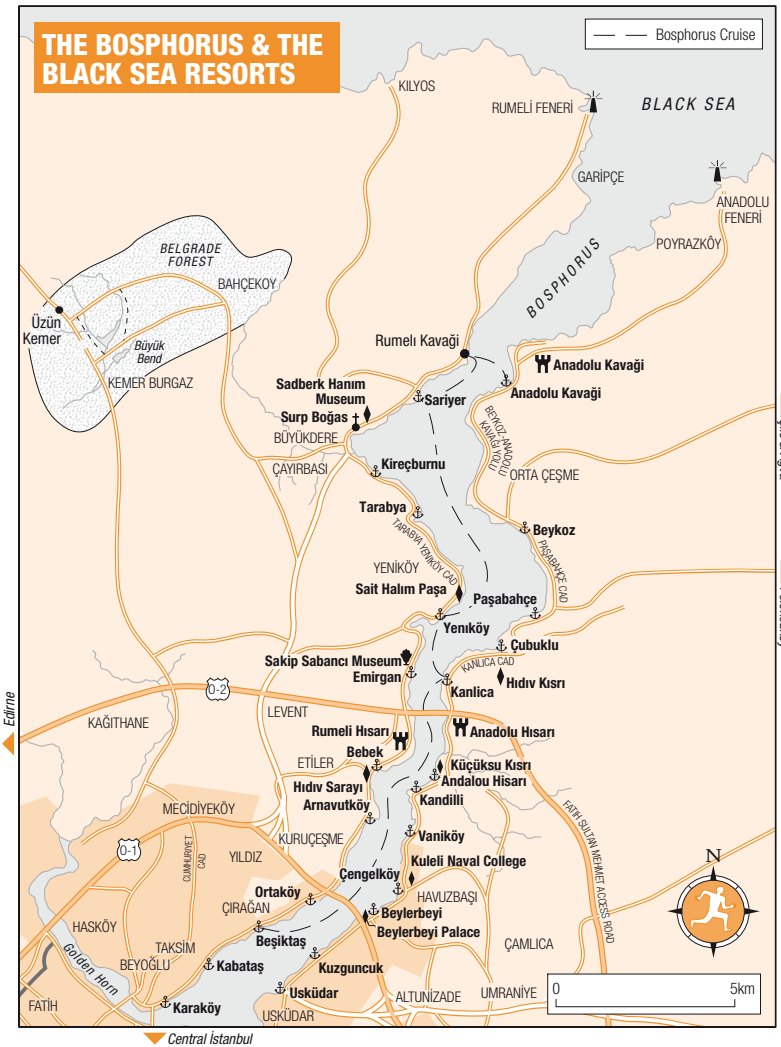
## The Bosphorus Cruise

Boats for the wonderful **Bosphorus Cruise**, which wends its way along the beautiful strait dividing Europe and Asia, leave from the Boğaz Ferry Terminal just east of the Galata Bridge in Eminönü (daily 10.35am, May–Sept also noon & 1.35pm).

In summer, especially at weekends, the queues to buy **tickets** (a bargain 17.5TL) can be very long, so give yourself at least half an hour to make your purchase – or, better, buy your ticket a day or two in advance. You may have to push and shove a little when boarding if you want to get a seat. The ferries are rather antiquated but comfortable enough, and you can buy snacks, sandwiches and drinks on board. The round trip, including a two-hour **lunch** stop at Anadolu Kavağı, takes about seven hours.

The boat **stops** at Beşiktaş, Kanlıca (Asia), Yeniköy, Sariyer and Rumeli Kavağı (all Europe) and, finally, Anadolu Kavağı (Asia); the only stop on the return is Beşiktaş. It's possible to leave the boat at any of the landings to explore the waterfront or hinterland, but most people do the return cruise.

Between mid-June and mid-September, a **night-time cruise** is an attractive option – the boat departs Eminönü at 7pm, reaching Anadolu Kavağı at 8.30pm, where it moors for dinner, before arriving back in Eminönü around midnight.




You can take an independent tour of the river by catching one of the frequent **ferries** that ply the waters from Eminönü and Cengelköy as far up as Rumeli Kavağı and İstinye – timetables (*vapur seferler*) are available from ferry terminals and tourist offices – though most visitors prefer the ease of the **Bosphororus Cruise** (see box opposite). To get more of a feel for the suburbs and villages themselves, hop on one of the **buses** that run back and forth on either side of the strait.

Even further afield are the beach resorts on the **Black Sea**. The former Greek fishing village of **Kılyos**, on the European side of the Bosphorus, has been overdeveloped and lost much of its former charm, but it does boast a thriving summer beach-bar/club scene. **Şile**, though equally built-up, is a little more

laidback and enjoys a clifftop location and white sandy beaches. **Ağva**, some 50km along the coast from Şile, is the quietest and most attractive of the three, though given the extra travelling time from the city is really only worth considering for an overnight trip.

# The European Shore



The **European Shore** is built up as far as Emirgan (and beyond), and the so-called Bosphorus villages of Kuruçeşme, Arnavutköy and Bebek are little more than suburbs of the city, whatever their predominantly wealthy residents may wish to believe. The former fishing villages of **Arnavutköy** and **Bebek** are still attractive, but the simple waterside *tavernas* and cafés of old have been replaced by swanky fish restaurants and bistros catering to the wealthy elite. Further north, **Emirgan** boasts the **Sakip Sabancı Museum**, which hosts major touring exhibitions of world-class art, and beautiful **Emirgan Parkı**. Beyond this, the major attractions are **Sadberk Hanım Museum**; the fishing village of **Rumeli Kavağı**, the turning point of the Bosphorus Cruise; and, west of Sariyer, **Belgrade Forest**, a weekend haven for Istanbullus escaping the bustling city.

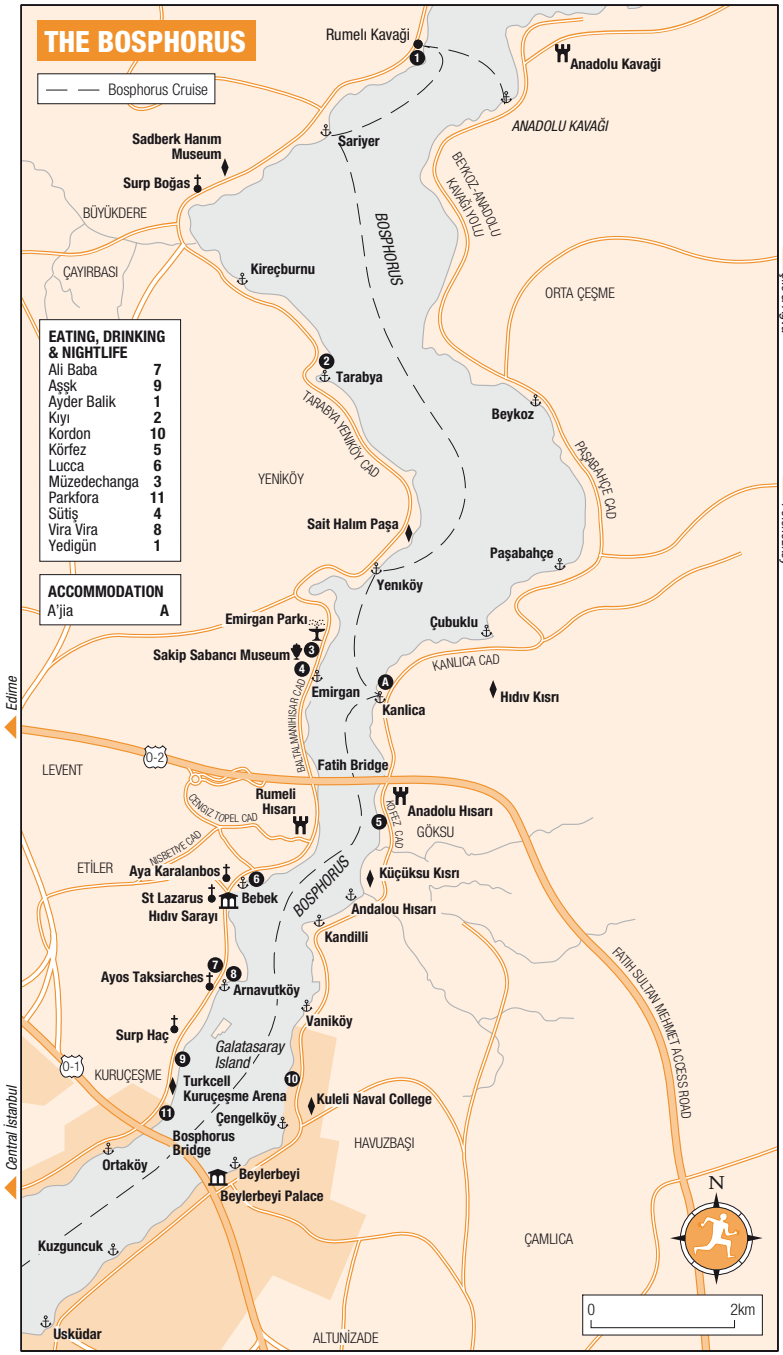
There are several **ferry** options on the European shore, or you can catch the very useful **#25/E bus** from the tram terminus at Kabataş (or the **#25/T** and #40 from Taksim) to Sariyer, from where there are plenty of *dolmuşes* on to Rumeli Kavağı. Alternatively, take the metro to Levent, then the **#25/A bus** to Rumeli Kavağı. The last *dolmuş* to Sariyer leaves at 11pm, from where later buses run back to Kabataş and Taksim.

## Kuruçeşme

From Ortaköy, the coast road runs north under the the kilometre-long Bosphorus Bridge, the first of two intercontinental bridges that span the river. **Kuruçeşme** (Dry Spring), home to the Turkcell Kuruçeşme Arena (see p.212), a waterside venue hosting some of the biggest visiting acts, both Turkish and foreign. The **Cemil Topuzlu Parkı**, slightly to the south, is a small but pleasantly landscaped waterfront park, and location of the reliable, if expensive, *Parkfora* fish restaurant (see p.203). Further along and slightly inland are a couple of churches, both still in use and both – reflecting the affluence of the neighbourhood – far better maintained than the majority of those in the poorer quarters of old, walled İstanbul. The Armenian Orthodox **Surp Haç** (Church of the Holy Cross) on Kırbaç Sokak, dating back to 1681, has been recently restored, there's a service between 9am and noon on Sundays. Offshore is **Galatasaray Island**, a floating pontoon owned by the famous football club (see p.238) and boasting an Olympic-sized pool, restaurants, a nightclub and cafés.

## Arnavutköy

Merging into Kuruçeşme, **ARNAVUTKÖY** is one of the most beautiful of the Bosphorus suburbs, especially when seen from the water, famous for its line of *yalıs*, wooden waterfront mansions with their boat moorings carved out beneath them (see box, p.164). In the pretty backstreets above the main


THE BOSPHORUS
Bosphorus Cruise
EATING, DRINKING & NIGHTLIFE
Ali Baba 7
Aşşk 9
Ayder Balik 1
Kıyı 2
Kordon 10
Körfez 5
Lucca 6
Müzedechanga 3
Parkfora 11
Sütiş 4
Vira Vira 8
Yedigün 1
ACCOMMODATION
A'jia A
Rumelı Kavağı
Anadolu Kavağı
ANADOLU KAVAĞI
Sariyer
Sadberk Hanım Museum
Surp Boğas
BÜYÜKDERE
ÇAYIRBASI
Kireçburnu
BOSPHORUS
BEYKOZ-ANADOLU KAVAĞI YOLU
ORTA ÇEŞME
Tarabya
TARABYA YENIKÖY CAD
Beykoz
YENIKÖY
PAŞABAHÇE CAD
Sait Halım Paşa
Paşabahçe
Yenıköy
Emirgan Parkı
Çubuklu
Sakip Sabancı Museum
KANLICA CAD
Emirgan
Kanlica
Hıdıv Kısrı
BALTALIMANI CAD
Fatih Bridge
LEVENT
Rumeli Hısarı
Anadolu Hısarı
CENGIZ TOPEL CAD
KUZEZ CAD
GÖKSU
ETİLER
NISBETIYE CAD
Aya Karalanbos
Küçüksu Kısrı
St Lazarus
Bebek
Hıdıv Sarayı
Andalou Hısarı
Kandilli
Ayos Taksiarches
Arnavutköy
Vaniköy
Surp Haç
Galatasaray Island
KURUÇEŞME
Turkcell Kuruçeşme Arena
Kuleli Naval College
Çengelköy
Bosphorus Bridge
HAVUZBAŞI
Ortaköy
Beylerbeyi
Beylerbeyi Palace
FATIH SULTAN MEHMET ACCESS ROAD
Kuzguncuk
ÇAMLICA
Usküdar
ALTUNİZADE
Edirne
Central İstanbul
Şile & Ağva
Polonezköy
O-1
O-2
N
0
2km

### Yalıs

İstanbul's wealthy elite (and there are plenty of them – the city has 27 of the country's top 30 taxpayers) may choose to live in luxury penthouse apartments, but in Ottoman times the place to be – at least in summer – was a wooden mansion, or *yalı*, right on the shores of the Bosphorus. These sumptuous two- or three-storey villas usually featured manicured lawns, peppered with rose beds and trees planted to provide shade, sloping down to the water's edge. Caiques bringing residents and guests to the *yalı* moored in an opening right under the house. Inside, the mansions were separated into the *haremlık*, used by women and family members only, and the *selamlık*, usually an all-male preserve where guests were entertained. There was also a *hamam*, a kitchen area and, of course, servants' quarters.

Most *yalıs* (from the Greek word for "coast") have not survived the vicissitudes of time, succumbing to fire, storm damage or wayward shipping. Those that remain are reminders of a more refined and leisured age when sailing boats rather than super-tankers drifted along the Bosphorus. There are some good examples on the European shore in Arnavutköy and north of İstinye (look out for the **Ahmet Atıf Paşa Yalı**), but the best are on the Asian side, from slightly south of the Bosphorus Bridge right up to Beykoz – the dilapidated **Amcazade Hüseyin Paşa Yalısı**, just shy of the Fatih Bridge, is the oldest *yalı* on the Bosphorus. All are subject to preservation orders; and if you're tempted to buy one, be warned – the bureaucracy involved in restoration is positively (and perhaps appropriately) Byzantine. Those that persevere are amply rewarded, though: larger, restored *yalıs* can fetch a cool US$1,000,000.

drag are the ruins of a synagogue, whilst a little to the east is the imposing bulk of the nineteenth-century Greek Orthodox **Ayos Taksiarches** (Church of the Taxiarch), with an *ayazma* (sacred spring) in a nearby chapel. The monumental domed church shows how powerful the Greek community must have been here in the 1800s. Although Arnatvutköy translates as the "Village of the Albanians", it was mainly inhabited by Christian Armenians and Greeks – and Jews.

## Bebek and around

**Bebek** (Turkish for "baby") is the beginning of real wealth on the Bosphorus, and the suburbs from here to Sariyer encompass some of the most beautiful, priceless Bosphorus *yalıs*. The fifteen-minute walk from Arnavutköy follows an attractive park-fringed (but shadeless) promenade, popular with swimming children, fishermen and sunbathing pensioners. En route, before you reach the ferry terminal, you'll pass Bebek's most famous building, the waterfront **Hıdıv Sarayı** (Khedive's Palace), an Art Nouveau-style mansion belonging to the Egyptian consulate. It's a little dishevelled now, with peeling paintwork, damaged metalwork, and satellite dishes all conspiring to spoil an otherwise fine building. North of the ferry terminal, fishermen rent out **rowing boats** by the hour.

Above Bebek, up the extremely steep Küçük Bebek Caddesi, there's a little **park** known as the *balkon* (balcony) with extensive Bosphorus views and a café. Between the mosque and the park is *Bebek Kahvesi*, Cevdet Paşa Cad 13, a century-old no-frills **café**, always full of people who get together to chat, play backgammon or watch their dogs romp around the park. In the backstreets here, there's also a lovely, recently renovated Greek church, **Aya Karalanbos**, and the nineteenth-century Catholic church of **St Lazarus**.

A fifteen-minute walk north along the promenade lies the impressive fortress of Rumeli Hisarı (Tues–Sun 9am–4.30pm; 3TL). Grander than its counterpart, Andalou Hisarı, across the strait (see p.160), this Ottoman fortress was constructed in four months in 1452, before the Ottoman Conquest of the city. It houses a small open-air theatre, providing an atmospheric summer-evening venue for concerts and plays, particularly during the International Music Festival (see p.44). The fortress sits in the shadow of the second Bosphorus crossing, the Fatih Bridge. Completed in 1988, it's amongst the world's longest suspension bridges (1090m), and spans the Bosphorus at the point where King Darius of Persia crossed the straits by pontoon bridge in 512 BC.

## Emirgan

The leafy suburb of **Emirgan**, further north along the Bosphorus, is home to the wonderful **Sakip Sabancı Museum** (Tues, Fri & Sun 10am–6pm, Wed 10am–10pm, Sat 10am–7pm; 10TL), set in gorgeous landscaped gardens just behind the waterfront. Located in a beautiful 1920s villa known as the Atlı Köşkü, the museum plays host to major international exhibitions, which have included subjects as diverse as Picasso, Dale and the Mongols. Permanently on display are some exquisite examples of Ottoman calligraphy, including some beautiful Korans whilst a modern glass-and-steel extension features Turkish (and Turkish-based) artists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Sakip Sabancı is the home of *Müzedechanga* (see p.203), the summer venue for the famed *Changa* restaurant in Beyoğlu.

A short stroll north of the museum is **Emirgan Parkı**, with its beautifully landscaped gardens and delightfully restored wooden *köşks*, the most appealing park in the city. Young kids will love it with its fair-ytale, Swiss chalet-style wooden *köşks* (one painted pink, one white, the other yellow and white), artificial lake and waterfall and decent play equipment; adults more for the swathe of green grass and stands of mature trees for shade. The *köşks* have

▲ Calligraphy tools at the Sakip Sabancı Museum

decent, if not cheap, cafés; if you're on a budget, bring your own picnic or buy a *gözleme* (a cheese or spiced-potato, stuffed *paratha*-style bread) from the stand at the entrance.

## Yeniköy and Tarabya

**Yeniköy**, the second stop on the European side of the Bosphorus Cruise, is one of the city's most exclusive areas and is the most expensive property on the İstanbul Monopoly board. **Tarabya**, just up the shore, runs it a close second. The wealth is not new, as evinced by the gorgeous *yalıs* that dot the waterfront hereabouts, and the summer residences of consular officials who came here to escape the heat and associated diseases of the city. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, both areas were predominately Greek, and there are a handful of **churches** in the streets behind the waterfront still functioning, especially in Yeniköy. Also worth looking out for is the splendid *yalı* of **Sait Halim Paşa** to the south of Yeniköy's quay, guarded by a couple of stone lions and the *Twin Yalı* to the north, designed by Abdül Hamit's chief architect, Raimondo D'Aranco, in his inimitable, Art Nouveau-influenced style. If you feel like splashing out, Tarabya is home to one of the best **fish restaurants** on the Bosphorus, *Kıyı*, just behind the harbour at Kefeliköy Cad 126 (see p.203).

## Sariyer

**Sariyer** is famous for its milk puddings and *böreks*, and between ferries there is ample time for a leisurely lunch in any one of the seafood **restaurants** that cluster around the quayside or in the daily **fish market** (one of the city's largest), north of the ferry terminal.

It's easy to idle away time at the **Sadberk Hanım Museum**, at Büyükdere Cad 27–29 (daily except Wed 10am–5pm; 7TL), and its beautifully displayed assortment of archeological and ethnographical objects. It's around 1km south of the Sariyer jetty; the #25/A bus passes by, as does the #40/B from Beşiktaş. On the first floor of the archeological section are finds ranging from the Neolithic to the Phrygian periods, with highlights including Assyrian clay-tablets, Urartian bronze belts, buckles and horse-bits – plus a fine collection of pottery oil lamps displayed in a vertically mounted wall case. The second floor is devoted to objects dating from the Mycenaean to the Hellenistic era, including some well-executed Athenian red-figure vases and pretty Hellenistic scent bottles, though the most arresting exhibit is a fourth-century BC candelabrum in the form of a dancing satyr. On the third floor, Roman and Byzantine-era exhibits dominate, with bronzes of assorted deities, a fine collection of *strigil* (the scraping device used by hygiene-conscious Romans in their bath-houses), and an assortment of Byzantine crosses, keys and scales and other small finds. Other rooms in the museum concentrate on things ethnographic, largely Ottoman. Most interesting are the mock-ups of rooms, including the bedroom of a nineteenth-century home kitted out with a four-poster bed, a mother-of-pearl inlaid cabinet, a brass brazier and a wooden rocking horse.

The museum's shop-cum-café gives onto a pleasant garden containing a few pieces of statuary; it also hosts regular temporary exhibitions, which are well worth keeping an eye out for.

Just south of the museum, behind the bus stop, is the beautiful, pastel-painted nineteenth-century Armenian Catholic church of **Surp Boğas**.

As well as being a stop on the Bosphorus Cruise, Sariyer has a **sea-bus** terminal for faster connections to the city in peak hours.

## Rumeli Kavağı

The last village on the European side of the Bosphorus is **Rumeli Kavağı**, a two-kilometre *dolmuş* or short ferry ride from Sariyer. It's nicer than Sariyer but is beginning to lose its village feel, though the area around the harbour retains much of its charm. There are some reasonable **fish restaurants** clustered around its ferry terminal, in particular the *Ayder Balik*, right next to the landing, and the nearby *Yedigün* (see p.203 for both). There's also a small private swimming **beach** here, one of the very few along the Bosphorus, though it is often restricted to women and children only.

A local **ferry** connects Rumeli Kavağı with Anadolu Kavağı on the Asian side, and with Sariyer.

## Belgrade Forest

Several kilometres west of Büyükdere, in the Istranca hills, **Belgrade Forest** (Belgrad Ormanları) was originally a hunting preserve of the Ottomans. The pine, oak and beech forest is now a popular retreat from the rigours of the city. It's most easily reached by car, though determined non-drivers can take the 25/E bus from Eminönü or Kabataş to Büyükdere and then a *dolmuş* to the village of **Bahçeköy**, on the east side of the forest. From here it's a 1.5-kilometre walk to **Büyük Bend reservoir** and the largest picnic ground in the forest.

A sophisticated system of dams, reservoirs, water towers and aqueducts is still in evidence around the forest, which supplied İstanbul with most of its fresh water during the Byzantine and Ottoman era. The most impressive of the aqueducts is the *Uzun* or **Long Aqueduct**, a one-kilometre walk south of Büyük Bend beyond Kemer Burgaz. Its tiers of tall, pointed arches were built by Sinan for Süleyman the Magnificent in 1563. Close to the reservoir are the remains of Belgrade village, whose name came about after the capture of Belgrade in 1521, when a community of Serbian POWs were settled here to take over the upkeep of the water-supply system. In the seventeenth century, the forest was "discovered" by the city's foreign community, who came to seek refuge from a particularly nasty pestilence that was wiping out half of İstanbul, and for the next century or so many wealthy Christians had second homes here. In the 1890s, the village was evacuated by Abdül Hamid II, who believed the inhabitants were polluting the city's water supply.

# The Asian Shore

On the **Asian Shore**, a number of once-small villages have merged into a great suburb stretching all the way up from Üsküdar to the second Bosphorus bridge. Still quite attractive despite the urban sprawl, these former fishing villages hold a few surprises, from the waterfront, nineteenth-century **Beylerbeyi Palace** and the Ottoman fortress **Anadolu Hisarı** to the **Hıdıv Kısri**, a beautiful nineteenth-century villa set in a pleasant park, and the shell of a **Byzantine fortress** at Andolu Kavağı. Away from the shore, exclusive **Pölenezköy** is a green weekend retreat for the city's more prosperous inhabitants.

The **#15/A bus** runs along the river from Üsküdar's main square to Anadolu Kavağı.

## Kuzguncuk and Beylerbeyi

*Dolmuşes* and buses follow the coast road the two or three kilometres from Üsküdar to **Kuzguncuk**, from where a thirty-minute walk up İcadiye Sokak leads to a **Jewish cemetery**, with its white marble gravestones laying flat on the ground instead of standing upright. İstanbul's Jewish community largely originates from 1492, when Beyazit II gave refuge to Jews escaping the Spanish Inquisition; some still speak "Ladino", a language close to fifteenth-century classical Spanish.

The main attraction of **Beylerbeyi**, the next village, 500m along and on the other side of the Bosphorus Bridge, is the **Beylerbeyi Palace** (daily except Mon & Thurs 9.30am–6pm; guided tours 8TL; camera 6TL), a nineteenth-century white-marble summer residence and guesthouse of the Ottoman sultans. Much admired by contemporary visitors from Europe – after her stay in 1869, Empress Eugénie had its windows copied in the Tuileries Palace in Paris – the palace is still popular with Western visitors. The interior decoration was designed by Sultan Abdülaziz himself, while some of the furniture, including the matching dining chairs in the *harem* and the *selamlık*, was carved by Sultan Abdülhamid II during his six years of imprisonment here up to his death in 1918. The central staircase, with its fanciful twisting shape, is perhaps the highlight, but there are all kinds of details to savour, from the neo-Islamic patterns on the ceilings down to the beautiful Egyptian *hasır*, the reed matting on the floor.

## Çengelköy and around

The pretty village suburb of **Çengelköy** is a short walk from Beylerbeyi, around the next bend of the Bosphorus. Its main landmark building, the **Kuleli Naval College**, once served as a hospital under the direction of Florence Nightingale in the Crimean War, though it's currently closed to the public. There's little of interest here apart from the boutique *Sumahan on the Water* hotel (see p.203), housed in an old *rakı* distillery, and its very stylish restaurant (see p.203).

A ten-minute bus ride from Çengelköy is the **Küçüksu Kasrı**, sometimes known as Göksu Palace (daily except Mon & Thurs 9.30am–4pm; 4TL), which takes both its names from the two nearby streams that empty into the Bosphorus. After passing a boatyard to your left, you'll cross a bridge over the Küçüksu Deresi; get off at the next stop, walk back to the sign saying "Küçük Saray Aile Bahcesi" and you'll find the palace at the end of a drive. Built in 1857 by Nikoğos Balian, son of the architect of Dolmabahçe Palace, its exterior is highly ornate – the Rococo carving is best seen from the Bosphorus, the intended approach. The whole of the palace interior is decorated with lace and carpets from Hereke and lit by Bohemian crystal chandeliers. The floors are mahogany, inlaid with rose- and almond-wood and ebony; upstairs is an ebony table on which Sultan Abdülaziz was wont to arm-wrestle with visitors of state. The palace was constructed on the site of several earlier incarnations, and the fountain from one of these still stands, a fine example of Ottoman Baroque, built in 1796.

The **Küçüksu Deresi** and the **Göksu** are the streams formerly known to Europeans as the "Sweet Waters of Asia", their banks graced by picnicking parties of Ottoman nobility. On the north bank of the Göksu stands the Ottoman fortress of **Anadolu Hisarı** (open 24hr; free), beneath the towering Fatih Bridge. It was built by Beyazit I in 1397, when the Ottoman forces first

reached the strait separating Asia from Europe. Near here, with fabulous views of the strait and the Fatih Bridge, is one of the city's best-regarded **fish restaurants**, *Körfez*, at Körfez Cad 78 (see p.203).

## Kanlıca

Backed by verdant forest, the attractive suburb of **Kanlıca** is famed for its **yoghurt**, which can be eaten at any of the little quayside restaurants – try the cheap and cheerful *Asırlık*, by the ferry landing, housed in an old wooden building with a veranda giving right onto the Bosphorus and dishing up tasty *köfte* (meatballs) for 10TL a portion. Alternatively, the *A'jia* **hotel**, in a delightful *yalı* at Çubuklu Cad 27 (see p.185), has a considerably more upmarket **restaurant** (see p.185).

On the top of a hill a twenty-minute walk behind the waterfront is the wonderful **Hıdıv Kısri** (Khedive's Villa) built for Abbas Hilmi Paşa, the last Khedive (the title given to governors of Egypt in Ottoman times), in 1900. It's an eclectic architectural mix, but look out for the Art Nouveau metalwork on the steam-powered lift and the beautiful stained-glass ceiling lights in the central tower. The building is now a restaurant and is surrounded by a beautifully maintained park with a café, both offering superb views over the Bosphorus.

## Anadolu Kavağı

The last call on the Bosphorus Cruise from Eminönü is laidback **Anadolu Kavağı**. The village has a distinct, if dilapidated, charm – balconied houses with boat-mooring stations overlook the river, while the main street is lined with some reasonable **fish restaurants**. All offer fixed-menu meals aimed squarely at the Bosphorus cruisers, most of whom are captive prey for the two hours the boat docks here. The cheapest deals (starting around 12TL) include salad, mussels, squid, farmed-fish (or *hamsi*) and a soft drink. A couple of reasonable choices are the family-run *Ceneviz*, housed in an old building that once served as the village's *kahvehane* (teahouse), and the *Coskun Balıkçısı*, set in an old wooden house, though neither are licensed. For a drink, try the *Durak Bufe* on the small square behind the landing, where a beer will set you back 4TL.

Sprawling across an overgrown hilltop above the town, is the Byzantine **fortress** (always open; free) from which the village takes its name. It affords excellent views of the Bosphorus, and, approaching from above you'll see various Greek inscriptions and even the imperial logo of the Paleologus dynasty (a cross with the letter "b" in each corner, which stands for "King of Kings, who Kings it over Kings"). To get to the fortress, take Mirşah Hamam Sokak from the dock and walk uphill for half an hour.

## Polonezköy

The small village of **POLONEZKÖY** (Polish Village), west of the main İstanbul–Şile road, was established in 1848 by **Prince Czartorisky**, the leader of the Polish nationals, who was granted exile in the Ottoman Empire. His main aim, along with other Eastern European exiles such as the poet Adam Mickiewicz and Hungarian nationalist leader Kossuth, was to establish a union of the Balkan races, including Romanians, Circassians and Turks, to counteract Panslavic expansion. The village has long attracted international

interest – among its most famous visitors have been Liszt, Flaubert, Pope John Paul I and Lech Wałęsa – and became known to tourists in the 1970s, when it was popular among İstanbullus in search of illicit pig meat, hard to find in the city. Following the building of the Bosphorus Bridge, Polonezköy became the fashionable place for İstanbul residents to own a second home away from the city's rabid pollution.

Few of the original Central European-style wooden houses, with their balconies and flower gardens, now remain, but the designation of the area as İstanbul's first national park has slowed development that threatened to ruin the surrounding countryside. A 4.5-kilometre track to the north of the village wends through forest of pine, chestnut, oaks and hornbeams, crossing streams on little wooden bridges.

**Hotels** here are mostly quite pricey: one of the nicest is the *Polka Country Hotel*, at Cumhuriyet Yolu 36 (☎0216/432 3220, ⓦwww.polka.com; doubles 100TL, 150TL at the weekend), a lovingly restored half-timbered farmhouse dating from 1905, with exposed beams. It has a pool, and pork chops feature on the menu. **Restaurant**-wise, the *Leonardo* on Köy Içi Sok 32 (☎0216/432 3082) was chosen as the country's top "Eating place with a garden" by respected *Hüriyet* newspaper. The Polish owner serves up the best of his country's dishes, as well as Turkish, French and Austrian cuisine. Starters begin at 7TL, mains up to 60TL for a top-notch steak – reservations are recommended, as it often fills with wedding parties.

There's no **public transport** to Polonezköy. It's around a twenty-kilometre drive from Üsküdar, on the way to the coast.

# The Black Sea resorts

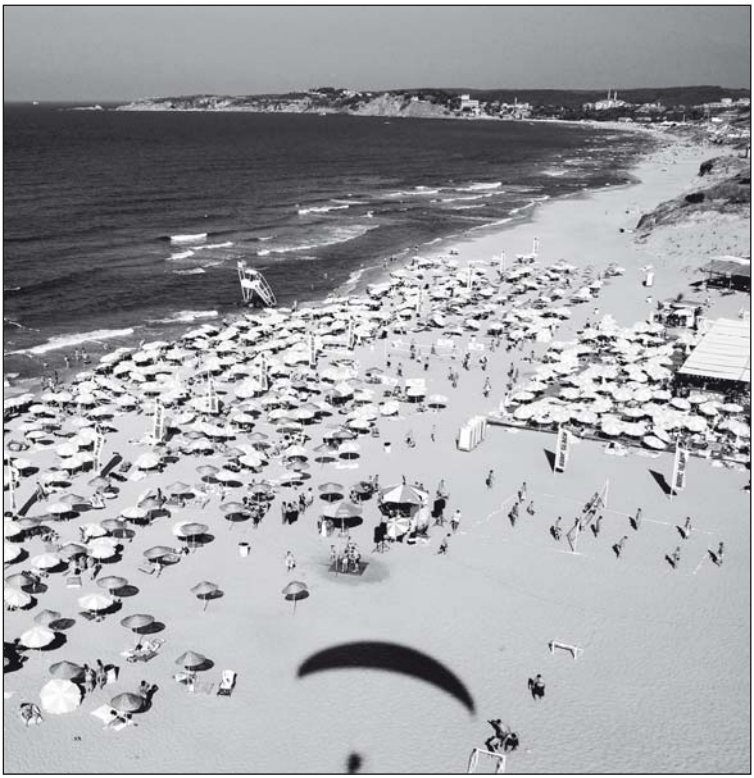
The **Black Sea** is relatively accessible from İstanbul, and if you're staying in the city for any length of time, its seaside villages, particularly **Şile** and **Ağva**, can make a good day-trip or weekend breaks. Bear in mind, however, that much of the development along the coast has been uncontrolled, with some resorts appallingly built-up: they can be quite disappointing in high season particularly, when they tend to fill with disgruntled Russian package tourists.

**Buses** run up the Bosphorus from Üsküdar's main square to Şile and Ağva.

## Kılyos

There's little of interest in **KİLYOS**, the nearest resort on the European side of the Bosphorus – the former Greek fishing village has sadly succumbed to a tide of holiday-home development, the beach is dirty, and the area's most imposing monument, a medieval Genoese castle, is occupied by the Turkish army and off-limits. If partying is your thing, however, the two private **beaches**, Solar and Nonstop (both 15TL including umbrella and lounger), hold weekend "events" in the summer holiday period – notably the **Radar Live Festival** (see p.209). If their thumping beachfront bar scene doesn't appeal, try the more exclusive Dalia, 2km from Kilyos in the village of Demirciköy, though admission and umbrella/lounger will set you back 25TL at the weekend, less during the week.

**Bus** #151 runs from Sariyer to Kilyos, and there are regular **domuşes** as well, with the last departure back to Sariyer at 8pm.



▲ Beach at Kilyos

## Şile

The main road from Asian İstanbul to **ŞILE** has led to increased development and some İstanbullu live here and commute into town, or have a weekend summerhouse. Out of season, it's easy to see Şile's attraction, perched on a clifftop overlooking a large bay and tiny island, with white sandy **beaches** stretching off to the west. There's also the pretty French-built black-and-white-striped **lighthouse** and the fourteenth-century **Genoese castle** on a nearby island. However, the town is best avoided during the summer months, when it's far too busy, and the sea has a strong undercurrent – several people drown here every year.

Şile's main historical claim to fame is that it was visited by Xenophon and his Ten Thousand, the army that was left leaderless when its officers were all murdered by the Persians. They stayed in Şile, then known as Kalpe, and Xenophon wrote in his memoirs about how well the site suited the establishment of a city. Apart from tourism, the town's only other industry is the production of **Şile bezi**, a kind of cheesecloth that local women embroider by hand and that is sold all over Turkey.

Several **buses** depart daily for Şile from the bus station in Üsküdar on Doğancilar Caddesi (hourly 9am–4pm; 1hr 15min).

## Ağva

About 50km east along the coast from Şile, the village of **AĞVA** is a quieter, marginally less developed spot, more worthy of the journey from İstanbul. The village is set in a beautiful location between two rivers, the Yeşilçay and the Göksü, both of which are fished to provide the livelihood of the local community. Ağva's **beach** has fine golden sand, but the currents here are notoriously strong. There are a few small **hotels** in Ağva, some with fish restaurants attached: the boutique *Acqua Verde* is set right on the banks of the river 800m in from the beach (Ⓣ0216/721 714, Ⓦwww.acquaverde.com.tr); rustic charm is the order of the day here but it doesn't come cheap at 200TL per double, more at the weekend.

The Şile **buses** from Üsküdar continue on for another hour to Ağva. The last bus back to Üsküdar via Şile leaves at 6pm in summer; in winter, it leaves at 5pm at the weekend, 3pm during the week.

# Listings

# Listings


⑩ Accommodation ..... 175

⑪ Eating ..... 186

⑫ Nightlife ..... 204

⑬ The Arts ..... 215

⑭ Gay and lesbian İstanbul ..... 222

⑮ Shopping ..... 225

⑯ Sports and activities ..... 237

⑰ Kids' İstanbul ..... 243

10

# Accommodation



Despite the recent surge of interest in İstanbul, finding **accommodation** is rarely a problem, particularly if you're prepared to be flexible about where you stay. Needless to say, in a city of this size, every type of lodging is available, from the multinational **hotel** chains to backpacker-orientated **hostels** and exclusive boutique establishments. Increasingly popular are longer-stay **apartments**, mainly situated in the Beyoğlu and Taksim districts across the Golden Horn from the Old City.

Apart from the most modest establishments (and even in many of these), en-suite bathrooms, TVs and breakfast are included in the price – most also have air-conditioning and double-glazing (İstanbul can be mighty cold in winter). Budget aside, the biggest decision you'll have to make is which part of the city to stay in. The **Old City**, which includes Sultanahmet and other areas falling within the old Byzantine land walls, is by far the most popular choice, followed by the area across the Golden Horn: trendy **Beyoğlu** and environs, plus the business district of **Taksim** to the north. If you have the money and hanker after exclusivity, the hotels fronting **the Bosphorus** may be an attractive alternative. The city is at its busiest during major conferences and events, such as the annual Formula One Grand Prix. Spring and autumn are often particularly busy, and with İstanbul a 2010 European Capital of Culture, it may become more difficult to find exactly what you want at the price you want to pay. It's advisable at all times to email (or phone) as far in advance as possible.

The Turkish lira has been stable for a lengthy period now, but most hotels still quote **prices** in euros or, more rarely, US dollars. Many, fed-up with non-arrivals, demand **credit-card deposits** before accepting a booking. Prices can vary widely according to season, and some hotels' room rates change on an almost daily basis according to demand. Many places offer **discounts** for cash or booking through their website, and special offers abound in slack periods, especially in the bigger hotels. Walk-in rack prices can be unrealistically high, having been fixed in a busy season or for the benefit of tour companies, and many hotels will bargain – it's worth checking ⓦ www.istanbulbudgethotels.com for information and prices before you leave home.

## Sultanahmet

The majority of first-time visitors to the city tend to stay in **Sultanahmet**, amongst the major attractions of the Blue Mosque, Topkapı Palace and Aya Sofya. The options around the **Hippodrome** are particularly good from a historical perspective, but the highest concentration of accommodation is to be found in

and around **Akbıyık Caddesi**, an immensely popular backstreet with a package-resort atmosphere. There are plenty of quieter streets in nearby **Cankurtaran**, the area between Sultanahmet and the Sea of Marmara. The hotels off **Divan Yolu** have the advantage of being handy for the Topkapı–Eminönü–Kabataş tram. The places listed below are marked on the map on p.54.

## Around the Hippodrome

**Arena Hotel** **Şehit Mehmet Paşa Yokuşu, Üçler Hamam Sok 13–15 ⓣ0212/458 0364, ⓦwww.arenahotel.com.** Extremely well-run hotel, converted from an Ottoman mansion, formerly the family house of the owner. Spacious rooms, with repro antique furnishings, a/c, cable TV and safe box. The large bathrooms are immaculate, and some come with tubs. A nice touch are the white bathrobe and slippers, and flowers laid out on the bed. Communal *hamam* downstairs, and a fifteen percent discount for cash. 140–210TL

**Hotel Alzer** **At Meydanı 72 ⓣ0212/516 6262, ⓦwww.alzerhotel.com.** Tall, narrow building in a quiet location opposite the Hippodrome, this might not the most characterful of the area's hotels, but its extremely comfortable rooms are good value and boast flat-screen TV, a/c, central heating and a safe box; breakfasting on the roof terrace affords stunning views over walnut trees to the Blue Mosque and the sea. Rooms at the back overlooking the Hippodrome are 35TL dearer. 232TL

**Hotel Antique** **Küçükayasofya Cad, Oğul Sok 17 ⓣ0212/516 4936, ⓦwww.hotelantique.com.** In a quiet neighbourhood with small, plainly decorated yet comfortable rooms, the *Antique* offers excellent value for the location and level of service. There's a roof terrace where you can have a drink looking directly onto the dome of the Blue Mosque. There's free pick-up/return to Atatürk International Airport for stays of five or more days. 76TL

**Hotel Ayasofya** **Demirci Reşit Sok 28, off Mehmet Paşa Sok ⓣ0212/516 9446, ⓦwww.ayasofyahotel.com.** Set in a restored wooden mansion-house just down from the Hippodrome, this is, despite the mock-wood vinyl flooring and modern furniture, a cheerful, comfortable and good-value choice. The bathrooms are spotless, and a/c and satellite TV are standard. The roof terrace commands fine views and is a mass of pot plants and shrubs. 110TL

**İbrahim Pasha Hotel** **Terzihane Sok 5 Adliye Yani ⓣ0212/518 0394, ⓦwww.ibrahimpasha.com.** This lovely townhouse, once the guesthouse for the İbrahim Paşa Sarayı (now the Museum of Turkish & Islamic Art), is arguably the most tasteful boutique hotel in Sultanhamet, successfully blending a stylish modern interior with Ottoman antiques. The rooms are uncluttered and very comfortable and, owing to its side-street location, quiet. Views from the roof terrace across the domes and minarets of Sultanhamet and down to the Sea of Marmara are superb, and the freshly prepared breakfast (with latte and espresso on tap) in the cosy and charming downstairs breakfast room a delight. 200TL weekdays, 225TL weekends.

**İstanbul Suite Home** **Dizdariye Çeşmesi Sok 51 ⓣ0212/458 5255, ⓦwww.istanbulsuitehome.com.** Situated a little way from the main tourist haunts, in a tall, narrow townhouse on a quiet backstreet south of Divan Yolu, the three apartments here are extremely stylish and very good value. Modish without being minimalist, all pale wood and white, each apartment has one double and one twin bedroom and a spacious dining area with attached kitchen. The appliances are all top quality (including flat-screen TVs), and there's a shared roof terrace with views over the Sea of Marmara. You can add an extra bed if you want to sleep five, making the 300TL per apartment per night even better value.

**Sarnıç Hotel** **Küçük Ayasifya Cad 26 ⓣ0212/518 2323, ⓦwww.sarnichotel.com.** The sixteen rooms of this nicely renovated townhouse are simply decorated but warm and welcoming, with a soothing colour scheme, and come with plenty of mod cons: a/c, central-heating, mini-bar and wi-fi. Breakfast is taken on the roof terrace, which has fine views, and if you fancy learning how to cook a few Turkish staples (such as stuffed vine-leaves or lentil soup), the chef will show you how. The only drawback is the rather soulless street it's set on. 135TL

**Turkoman Hotel** **Asmalı Çeşme Sok, Adliye Yana 2 ⓣ0212/516 2956, ⓦwww.turkomanhotel.com.** Friendly hotel in a converted house done out in nineteenth-century Turkish style, right on the Hippodrome and opposite the

Egyptian Obelisk, with fine views of the Blue Mosque from the roof terrace. Each attractive room is named after one of the old Turkoman tribes, and has a brass bed, wooden floors, a/c and satellite TV. Some of the en-suite bathrooms have tubs. Free airport transfers. 120–170TL

## Around Topkapı Palace

**Ayasofya Konakları Soğukçeşme Sok ⓣ0212/513 3660, ⓦwww.ayasofyakonaklari.com.** A row of pastel-coloured houses reconstructed in nineteenth-century style, with perfume-sounding names, the *Konakları* is set in a peaceful cobbled street tucked away behind the back wall of the Aya Sofya. The setting is fantastic, and the hotel lit-up atmospherically at night, breakfast is taken in the leafy garden and the rooms are simply but elegantly furnished. It's picture-postcard stuff – but you pay for it. 290–340TL

▲ Ayasofya Konakları

## Around Divan Yolu

**Kybele Hotel Yerebatan Cad 35 ⓣ0212/511 7766, ⓦwww.kybelehotel.com.** Atmospheric, unusual, late nineteenth-century rendered brick building, colourfully painted. Inside are over three thousand multi-hued antique-style light fittings and some great original Bakelite radios. The spacious rooms sport marbled wallpaper and old wood flooring. Breakfast is served in a courtyard full of candelabra, cushions, empty bottles and other knick-knacks. It's the antithesis of minimalism, and some people find it too eccentric in style, but it's well managed and the staff are friendly. 160–210TL

**Nomade Hotel Ticarethane Sok 15 ⓣ0212/511 1296, ⓦwww.hotelnomade.com.** Described as "ethnic trendy" by the French designer responsible for its chic interior, this hotel has white-floored rooms finished in bold colours, with rich coordinating fabrics and blonde-wood modernist furniture. The charming and sophisticated twin sisters who run it ensure excellent service. There's a great roof terrace, too. Recommended for those with an eye for quirky design. 150TL

**Yeşil Ev Kabasakal Cad 5 ⓣ0212 517 6785, ⓦwww.istanbulyesilev.com.** On a leafy cobbled street between Aya Sofya and the Blue Mosque, and built in the style of the house that originally occupied the site, *Yeşil Ev* ("Green House") is furnished in period (mid-nineteenth-century) style, with wood-panelled ceilings and antique rugs. The rooms are good value for this quality; "Pasha's Room" (800TL) has its own Turkish bath and ostentatious Ottoman bedroom suite. There's a fine garden restaurant with a central marble fountain open to non-residents. It's more expensive than the similar *Ayasoya Konakları* (it was restored by the same organization) but was the hotel of choice for President Mitterand when he was in town. 425TL

## Cankurtaran

**Alp Hotel Akbıyık Cad, Adliye Sok 4 ⓣ0212/517 9570, ⓦwww.alpguesthouse.com.** Fine establishment, with a dark wood exterior, situated down a quiet lane. The smallish rooms are immaculately furnished, some with four-poster beds, and have a/c, wooden floors and tidy bathrooms. The pretty breakfast terrace commands views of palaces, mosques and the sea. 120TL

**Apricot Hotel Amiral Tafdil Sok 18 ⓣ0212/638 1658, ⓦwww.apricothotel.com.** Set in a quiet backstreet running parallel to busy Akbiyik Cad and run by an unassuming and friendly husband and wife team, this small hotel has an intimate atmosphere. Rooms vary in size and are painted in soothing apricot tones; some have balconies. Bathrooms either have big tubs, fancy showers or Jacuzzis. When around, owner Hakan, a professional tour guide, is a font of knowledge about the city. Double-glazing, a/c and cable TV are standard. There are plans to add a roof terrace in the near future. 119TL

**Armada Hotel** **Ahırkapı Sok 24 ⓣ0212/455 4455, ⓦwww.armadahotel.com.tr.** Quality hotel featuring Ottoman-style rooms, all with central heating, double-glazing and a/c. Rooms are tastefully decorated, with Edirne-esque painted wood friezes. The rooftop terrace has lovely views over the sea and, at night, the illuminated mosques of Sultanahmet. A lavish breakfast spread includes home-made jams and pastries. Doubles 136TL.

**Bauhaus Hostel** **Bayramfırını Sok 11–13 ⓣ0212/638 6534, ⓦwww.travelinistanbul.com.** With a mix of dorm bunks and doubles, this is a homely, clean and friendly option – more like a guest-house than a hostel. There's a nice roof terrace where you can lounge around on bean bags and enjoy a beer overlooking the Sea of Marmara, a kilim-cushioned sitting area and free internet use, but breakfast is extra. Dorms 18–28TL, doubles 60TL or 80TL en suite.

**Berk Guesthouse** **Kutlugün Sok 27 ⓣ0212/517 6561, ⓦwww.berkguesthouse.com.** Completely ignoring the rush to "boutiqueify", this resolutely old-fashioned family-run place has eight standard rooms, plus a couple of spacious luxury rooms with mini-bar, a/c and TV. The nineteenth-century mansion has been lovingly restored, and has great views of the former prison – now the *Four Seasons Hotel* – from the rooftop lounge and terrace (where breakfast is taken). Twenty percent low-season discount. Standard 90TL, luxury 140TL.

**Big Apple** **Bayram Fırını Sok 12 ⓣ0212/517 7931, ⓦwww.hostelz.com.** Good-value, cheerful hostel sporting a large lobby with billiard table (free). Well-kitted-out dorms (16–20TL) have wooden floors and bunk beds with new mattresses. Shared, clean, separate toilet and shower on each floor. You can use the kitchen, and there's a nice covered terrace and a small roof terrace, both with decent outlooks.

**Empress Zoe** **Akbıyık Cad, Adliye Sok 10 ⓣ0212/518 2504, ⓦwww.emzoe.com.** Owned by an American, who has decorated throughout with her personal touch – the nineteen rooms are in dark wood with richly coloured textiles, accessed by a narrow spiral staircase. Part of the basement walls belong to the remains of the Great Byzantine Palace, and the sun terrace has panoramic views of the Blue Mosque and Aya Sofya. There's a lovely garden to one side, shaded by cypress, palm and bay trees where you can have breakfast or an evening aperitif. Ten percent discount for cash. 150–200TL

**Four Seasons Hotel** **Tevfikhane Sok 1 ⓣ0212/638 8200, ⓦwww.fourseasons.com.** Until the early 1980s, this formidable Neoclassical building served as the Sultanahmet Prison before being completely renovated as one of the city's leading hotels. The watchtowers and exercise court are still evident beneath the flowers and vines, but the 54 beautiful high-ceilinged rooms are unrecognizable as former cells. The rooms are as sumptuous as you would expect, though the flat-screen TVs in the palatial bathrooms seem a little excessive. Excellent, attentive service, but suite prices reach ridiculous levels. 820TL

**Hanedan Hotel** **Kakbıyık Cad, Adliye Sok 3 ⓣ0212/516 4869–418 1564, ⓦwww.hanedanhotel.com.** Tucked away on a quiet side street off Akbıyık Cad, this friendly hotel, run by four friends, is great value for the quality of accommodation and service. The dark wood floors in the rooms are off-set by the pale plain walls, and the overall feel is one of unfussy comfort. New fittings in the bathrooms gleam, and a/c, central heating and safe box are standard. There's a roof terrace with stunning views over the Aya Sofya and the Sea of Marmara. Discount for long stays. 100TL

**Istanbul Hostel** **Kutlugün Sok 35 ⓣ0212/516 9380, ⓦwww.istanbulhostel.net.** A deservedly popular hostel, in the heart of the backpacker quarter, with double rooms and dorms with anything from six to thirteen beds, and spotless, shared, marble bathrooms. The beds are good quality and comfy. The cosy cellar-bar has big-screen satellite TV, video, fireplace and internet access, and there are more bars on the roof terrace. Thirteen-person dorm bed 17TL, doubles 46TL.

**Hotel Poem** **Terbıyık Sok 12 ⓣ0212/638 9744, ⓦwww.hotelpoem.com.** Very friendly family-run establishment, in two adjoining nineteenth-century wooden mansion-houses. Rooms are named after famous Turkish poets or their poems (you can stay in "Nirvana") and have a/c and immaculate bathrooms. The downstairs terrace is shaded by walnut and fig trees, while the roof terrace has panoramic views

of the Aya Sofya and the sea. Rooms with a sea view cost twenty percent extra. Free internet access. 140TL

**Hotel Uyan** **Utangaç Sok 25 ⓣ0212/518 9255, ⓦwww.uyanhotel.com.** Atmospheric hotel set in a beautifully renovated late-1920s corner-plot building in the heart of the Old City. Most rooms are light and airy, with light wood, oriental-rug-scattered floors, white walls and white bed linen. There are different sized rooms to choose from, from small doubles to a honeymoon suite. An added bonus are the breathtaking views from the roof terrace. Rooms from 105TL, suites up to 260TL.

**Orient Youth Hostel** **Akbıyık Cad 13 ⓣ0212/517 9493, ⓦwww.orienthostel.com.** Popular place with a lively rooftop bar and a reasonable restaurant. The hostel was undergoing a massive refurbishment programme at the time of writing, with the basic but clean dorm rooms (20TL) being supplemented with hotel-standard en-suite rooms with fancy items such as flat-screen TVs – though with a price rise to match, at 140TL for a three-bed room (you can add an extra bed to reduce the cost if there's four sharing).

**Side Hotel & Pension** **Utangaç Sok 20 ⓣ0212/517 2282, ⓦwww.sidehotel.com.** Pricier en-suite rooms on the hotel side, cheaper ones with shared bathroom in the pension, both sharing the extensive breakfast terraces, which have great views of the Princes' Islands. The whole complex, owned by three charismatic brothers, is bright, spacious and friendly. Like the nearby *Berk Guesthouse*, this place has resisted the pressure to go all modern or faux-Ottoman and instead offers decidedly old-fashioned (the bedspreads are a tartan-check or shiny artificial silk ruche) comfort for a reasonable price. To be honest, it's not worth paying the extra for the hotel, as the only real benefits are a/c and a TV. Pension 70–90TL, hotel 100–120TL.

**Sultan Hostel** **Akbıyık Cad 21 ⓣ0212/516 9260, ⓦwww.sultanhostel.com.** The nearby *Orient*'s main rival has a rather more relaxed style and is very popular because of its spotless rooms, comfy beds sporting gleaming white linen, and regularly cleaned shared bathrooms. A spot in the six-bed dorms offers the best value, though the en-suite doubles or twins aren't bad either. The staff are very friendly and the restaurant, which spills out onto the street, incredibly popular with both guests and passers-by. Dorms 25TL, rooms 40TL.

**Tria Hotel** **Turbıyık Sok 7 ⓣ0212/518 4518, ⓦwww.triahotelistanbul.com.** You can absorb the city's atmosphere without leaving this small hotel, topped by a stunning roof terrace with views over the Aya Sofya, Blue Mosque, Sea of Marmara and the Bosphorus. The rooms are traditional in feel (dark wood, framed prints adorning the walls) but stylish (white walls, white bathrooms) and comfortable (the beds are king-size, the linen fresh and crisp). As a bonus, there's tea- and coffee-making facilities, whilst satellite TV and a/c is standard. 190TL

## Sirkeci

The area around **Sirkeci station**, famous as the last (eastbound) stop on the *Orient Express*, has much in its favour: Sultanahmet and the city's most famous sites are a short walk away up the hill; it's a stone's throw to the ferry terminals on the Golden Horn in Eminönü; and the nightspots on İstiklal Caddesi lie just across the Galata Bridge. Hotels in the lower part of this working, bustling neighbourhood tend to be better value than in Sultanahmet or Taksim, which may appeal to budget travellers keen to avoid the backpacker joints around Cankurtan. On the downside, there's a paucity of decent eating places (with a few exceptions, listed on p.190), and it has the transitional feel common to areas around major stations the world over. The places listed below are marked on the map on p.81.

**Hüriyet Hotel** **Cnr of Nöbethane Cad & Serdar Sok ⓣ0212/520 3787, ⓦwww.istanbul.hurriyet-hotel.com.** Excellent value, Kurdish-run hotel tucked away behind the station. New beds, white linen, clean carpets and spacious rooms, and they even offer a passable breakfast. The en-suite bathrooms are very clean, and there's 24hr hot water. Rates go

down in winter, but it's worth bargaining at any time. 60TL

**Sirkeci Konak** **Taya Hatun Cad 5 ⓣ0212/528 4344, ⓦwww.sirkecikonak.com.** The flagship of the Sirkeci group, who do appear to have wider ambitions in bringing this neglected area up to scratch. The hotel, an old Ottoman *konak*, or mansion, right next to the walls of Gülhane Parkı, is neither hip not trendy but is very professionally run and offers good old-fashioned comfort. There are tea- and coffee-making facilities in the rooms, palatial en-suite bathrooms and comfy beds. There's a fitness centre and small pool in the basement, and a decent fish restaurant on the roof terrace, which has commanding views over the park and Topkapı Palace. There's also free afternoon tea for guests and various demonstrations on offer, from Turkish cookery to Sufi culture. 300TL

**Yıldız Hotel** **Nöbethane Cad 36 ⓣ0212/520 5254.** Far better than the grotty exterior suggests, this hotel is about as cheap as they come – it certainly won't suit everyone, but if you're on a tight budget it's worth considering. The staff are very friendly, and the female cleaners keep the place spotless. Rear rooms have views over the station roof to the sea. It's very basic and the showers are often cold, but when the doubles are cheaper than a couple of dorm beds in Sultanahmet it's difficult to complain. 45TL

## The Grand Bazaar and around

The districts of **Aksaray** and **Laleli** may, at first sight, appear to have little to recommend them, yet plenty of visitors do stay here quite happily, appreciating the central, but still historic, location between the tourist-circus of Sultanahmet, and the less visited northwest quarter. The prostitution and associated petty crime for which the area was notorious is now confined to the area south of Ordu Caddesi, and you should encounter no more problems here than anywhere else in the city – but you may well get better value. The places listed below are marked on the map on p.90.

**Senator Hotel** **Cnr of Gençturk Cad & Şirvanizade Sok ⓣ0212/5281865, ⓦwww .senatorhotel.com.** An extremely well-run hotel on a quiet (apart from the nearby mosque) backstreet, its small but well-laid out rooms offer firm, comfy beds complete with crisp white linen, mini-bar, a/c, wall-mounted plasma TVs and spotless en-suite bathrooms with tubs. There's an in-hotel a la carte restaurant, and the breakfast buffet offers a wide choice, from Coco Pops to the finest Turkish goat's cheese. Check the website for promotional packages and special deals. 135TL

**Soğut Hotel** **Bukalidede Sok 11–13 ⓣ0212/519 2011, ⓦwww.soguthotel.com.tr.** The Neo-classical facade of this white-painted modern block, tucked away behind the brutalist but impressive İstanbul Municipality building, conceals a rather glitzy affair. It looks like (and probably is) the kind of place to appeal to nouveau riche Russians. Having said that, though, the rooms are large, spotless and have all mod cons, plus the en-suite bathrooms have good-sized tubs. There's a top-floor bar with good views and reasonably priced drinks, a pleasant garden area, and a free sauna in the basement. Not bad value, though check the website for offers. 205TL

## The northwest quarter

There are only a couple of options worth considering in this atmospheric, traditional area of the Old City, but their proximity to some of the city's most interesting yet little-visited sights is a major plus. The places listed below are marked on the map on p.102.

**Hotel Daphnis** **Sadrazam Ali Paşa Cad 26 ⓣ0212/531 4858, ⓦwww.hoteldaphnis.com.** This charming boutique hotel, contrived from a small terrace of century-old Greek townhouses, is situated close to the shore of the Golden Horn, just a short distance from Fener's Greek Orthodox Patriachate – which means it gets its fair share of visitors from Greece. It's less messed about with than the majority of boutique conversions, though the front rooms, with fine views over the Golden Horn, are very noisy due to the busy main road. 155TL

**Kariye Hotel** **Kariye Camii Sok 6, Erdirne Kapı ⓣ0212/534 8414, ⓦwww.kariyeotel.com.** Situated right next door to arguably the finest Byzantine site in the city (the Kariye Museum) and a stone's throw from the Theodosian land walls, this carefully restored nineteenth-century mansion is a model of restraint and elegance. The rooms are done out in soft pastel colours, much of the furniture is ornate late nineteenth century in style but is softened by cream paint, and a polished honey-coloured parquet floor, enlivened by the odd tasteful kilim, further enhances their ambience. There are ceiling fans rather than a/c, which is quite sufficient in this elevated, tree-shaded location. The only downside is the rather small, shower-only bathrooms, but the wonderful attached restaurant, the *Asithane* (see p.198), more than makes up for this. 155TL

## Beyoğlu and around

The heart of **Beyoğlu**, the former European quarter, is undoubtedly **İstiklal Caddesi** – lined with gorgeous nineteenth-century townhouses and arcades, it's İstanbul's premier entertainment area, home to the city's densest concentration of restaurants, bars and clubs. **Tepebaşı**, a mixed commercial/tourist district just west of İstiklal Caddesi's southern end, gives easy access to İstiklal but has a number of charms of its own, from trendy rooftop bars and restaurants to the impressive Pera Museum. There are also a couple of options close to the **Galata Tower**. **Cihangir**, on the northern side of Sıraselviler Caddesi, is an affluent yet bohemian backwater with splendid views of the Bosphorus.

At the northerneastern end of İstiklal Caddesi, **Taksim**, the city's major business and shopping district, has a wide range of hotels aimed largely at business travellers and tour groups. Rates here are usually higher than in other areas, but bargains can be found. It's not so convenient for sightseeing in Sultanahmet, but Taksim affords easy access to the European shore of the Bosphorus. To the north of Taksim Square, the posh and quiet (at least away from busy Cumhüriyet Cad) neighbourhoods of **Harbiye** and, in particular, **Nişantaşı**, offer great shopping opportunities for the discerning (and well-off) punter and a scattering of trendy places to eat and drink. Needless to say, in such an affluent area, room rates are high.

### İstiklal Caddesi, Galata and Tepebaşı

The places listed below are marked on the map on p.128.

**Anemon Galata** **Büyükhendek Cad 11, ⓣ0212/293 2343, ⓦwww.anemonhotels.com.** If minimalist chic and designer cool leave you cold, this could be the place for you. The sumptuous rooms in this rebuilt nineteenth-century townhouse near the Galata Tower aim squarely for comfort over style. Neo Art Nouveau-style statuettes grace the lobby, stairs and bedside tables, whilst dark curtains, carpets and furniture contrast aesthetically with pastel and cream walls. The sizeable bathrooms have tubs as well as showers, and the views from the incongruously designer-chic roof restaurant/bar are superb. 240TL

**Büyük Londra Oteli** **Meşrutiyet Cad 117, Tepebaşı ⓣ0212/249 1025, ⓦwww.londrahotel.net.** Palatial, mid-nineteenth-century townhouse. Many of the rooms are time-worn and cluttered with battered period furniture, which gives the hotel its retro-bohemian charm. Others that have been modernized have inevitably lost their raffishness. Ernest Hemingway stayed here in 1922 when he

was a journalist covering the Turkish War of Independence, as did Alexander Hacke when shooting the definitive film of the city's music scene, *İstanbul: Crossing the Bridge*. 120TL

**Eklektik Guest House** **Kadribey Çıkmaz 4 Galata ⓣ0212/243 7446, ⓦwww.eklektikgalata.com.** Seven individually decorated and furnished rooms (from cheerful retro to faux-Ottoman) in a converted period building with views over the imposing Galata Tower and Bosphorus – a great choice if you're looking for something a little different in this trendy, up-and-coming area of the city. Low-season discounts. 165–200TL

**Galata Residence** **Bankalar Cad, Hacı Ali Sok 27, Galata ⓣ0212/292 4841, ⓦwww.galataresidence.com.** Beautifully restored late nineteenth-century building, once belonging to the wealthy local Jewish Kamondo family, with seven two-bed apartments (150TL) and twice as many four-bed apartments (240TL). The *Galata Residence* has been around for awhile, and its apartments aren't as designer-flash as some of the more newer places, but they're extremely comfortable and well located, and the ceiling fans keep things cool enough on hot summer nights. Weekly and monthly lets are considerably cheaper. There's also a roof-terrace Greek-style fish restaurant (closed July & Aug).

**Hotel Devman** **Asmalımescit Sok 52 ⓣ0212/245 6212, ⓦwww.devmanhotel.com.** Modern, well-run hotel at the bottom end of one of the city's busiest and most happening streets. It is great value – a/c doubles include a decent buffet breakfast – and, until the tide of raucous tables in the street bars and cafés sweeps further down the hill, a quiet place. It's not going to win any design awards, but the spacious rooms have nicely coordinated furnishings and the blue-tiled bathrooms are spotless. 70TL

**Hotel Silviya** **Asmalımescit Sok 54 ⓣ0212/292 7749, ⓕ243 6115.** Clean and friendly, the *Silviya* is in need of a little attention but worth considering if the slightly dearer *Devman* next door is full. Sizeable, carpeted rooms painted a soothing green, and immaculate bathrooms with decent-quality fittings. The (very average) breakfast is taken in the small ground-floor TV room. Perfect situation for sampling the vibrant nightlife but far enough away from the street action to allow you to get some kip. 65TL

**Lush Hip Hotel** **Siraselviler Cad 12 ⓣ0212/243 9595, ⓦwww.lushhiphotel.com.** Aimed at long-weekender/city-breakers determined to make the most of the nightlife and shopping, this boutique hotel has 22 individually designed rooms in a nineteenth-century apartment block on gloomy, canyon-like Siraselviler Cad. Room 101 is all restrained (ie it's still comfy) modernism, whilst 411 has more of a traditional feel to it. Whatever the style, a CD player, satellite TV, a/c and hypo-allergenic mattresses and bed linen are standard. Low-season and long-stay discounts. 220–298TL

**Marmara Pera Hotel** **Meşrutiyet Cad 21 ⓣ0212/2514646, ⓦwww.themarmarahotels.com.** Opulent yet stylish hotel housing the cool *Mikla* restaurant (see p.200), the *Marmara* claims to meld '30s nostalgia with '70s romanticism. A great feature of summer visits is the elegant rooftop pool and bar, with glorious vistas over the city. The rooms feature modish modular furniture, crisp white linen, flat-screen TVs and a/c, and the views from those on the upper storeys are stunning. 190TL

**Monopol Hotel** **Meşrutiyet Cad 223, Tepebaşı ⓣ0212/251 7326, ⓦwww.monopolhotel.com.** Opposite the old US Embassy building, the plain but comfortable rooms at the *Monopol* have one to four beds, a/c, satellite TV and a fridge. Not exactly brimming with style or character, it's nonetheless good value for such a prominent area, though the front rooms can get noisy at night when the Beyoğlu bars turn out. 100TL

**Pera Palas** **Meşrutiyet Cad 98–100, Tepebaşı ⓣ0212/251 4560, ⓦwww.perapalas.com.** A contender for the most atmospheric hotel in İstanbul (see box, p.130), the *Pera* was built in the nineteenth century to accommodate *Orient Express* passengers – its rooms are marked with the names of famous occupants such as Agatha Christie and Graham Greene. Set to re-open late in 2009.

**Richmond Hotel** **İstiklal Cad 445 ⓣ0212/252 5460, ⓦwww.richmondhotels.com.tr.** Suites apart, this place is nowhere near as trendy as you might think given its central location on buzzing İstiklal Cad and the presence of one of Beyoğlu's coolest roof-bars, *Leb-i-Derya Richmond* (see p.207). The standard rooms are plain, with white walls and muted brown soft-furnishings, but do have music-systems, a/c and wi-fi. It's perennially popular with businessmen and travellers alike – and if you can stretch to a suite, they're considerably more stylish. 150TL

**Saydam Hotel** **Asmalımescit–Sofyalı Sok 1 ⓣ0212/251 8186, ⓕ244 0366** Basic but very clean rooms, and small shower-only bathrooms – the place to stay if you want budget accommodation right in the heart of the nightlife of Beyoğlu. Breakfast, taken in the (again small) lobby area downstairs is OK, but you can reduce the room rate a little by skipping it and breakfasting elsewhere. Even if you don't turn in until midnight, you'll still fall asleep to the sounds of revellers drinking and eating on trendy Sofyalı Sok below. 60TL

**Suite Home İstiklal** **İstiklal Cad 45 ⓣ0212/245 0772, ⓦwww.istanbulsuite.com.** In the heart of the action near the Taksim end of this buzzing street, offering three standards of room: business class; business roof room, where you pay more for the view; and spacious family suites. Decor is simple and modern without being too minimalist, and the kitchens are well equipped and functional. Worth considering if you're here for a week or more, as prices drop considerably for longer stays – and if you don't want to eat out every meal. Business class 180TL, business roof 270TL.

**Vardar Palace Hotel** **Sıraselviler Cad 54, Taksim ⓣ0212/252 2888, ⓦwww.vardarhotel.com.** Renovated apartment building dating from 1901, on an interesting street running southwest from Taksim Square. There are no views at the back, and rooms at the front are noisy, but it's a reasonable option for the area, with period mahogany furniture, spacious rooms and a friendly atmosphere. The hotel is well poised for the action on Sıraselviler Cad, home to everything from punk/metal clubs to cool food/club venues. Doubles booked on the net are around 150TL, though the rack-rates are much higher.

**World House Hostel** **Galipdede Cad 85 ⓣ0212/293 5520, ⓦwww.worldhouse istanbul.com.** If you're looking for the cheapest possible accommodation in Beyoğlu, then this is the place, with a spot in an eight-bed dorm at 20TL – including breakfast. The doubles, though, are as expensive as those in nearby budget hotels. Clean, light, high-ceilinged rooms, friendly staff and a wonderful location between the Galata Tower and the Tünel end of İstiklal Cad, it's a welcome addition to the city's hostels and a world removed from the Sultanahmet hostel scene. Despite the nearby 24hr entertainment, it's quiet, too – bar the prayer call from the adjacent mosque. Dorms 20TL, rooms 75TL.

## Cihangir

The places listed below are marked on the map on p.128.

**Cihangir Hotel** **Arslan Yatağı Sok 33 ⓣ0212/251 5317, ⓦwww.cihangirhotel.com.** Offering old-fashioned comfort in a quiet backstreet in the affluent, rather arty suburb of Cihangir, with large, cosily lit rooms, dark-wood furniture and excellent service. TV, a/c, wi-fi and mini-bar are standard, and a huge buffet breakfast is served on a commanding terrace. You'll pay half as much again for a room with a Bosphorus view. 120TL

**Villa Zurich** **Akarsu Yokuşu Cad 44–46 ⓣ0212/293 0604, ⓦwww.hotelvillazurich.com.** Delightful, good-value hotel situated on one of the "happening" streets in Cihangir, where well-heeled but slightly alternative locals mingle with a sizeable foreign community. It offers large, well-equipped doubles – some with stunning panoramas of the Bosphorus – with satellite TV, a/c and a baby-sitting service. The rooftop terrace has the best views of all, and serves as the breakfast salon and, in the evening, a well-regarded fish restaurant. 204TL

## Taksim Square, Harbiye and Nişantaşı

The places listed below are marked on the map on p.134.

**Avrupa Hotel** **Topçu Cad 32, Taksim ⓣ0212/250 9420, Ⓔotelavrupa@superonline.com.** On a quiet street, this is a bargain in an area where most other hotels are in the luxury class. Small rooms with small beds and shared bathrooms – some en suite with TV – but there's a pleasant breakfast room. Friendly staff, and French and German spoken. 90TL, waterless rooms around twenty percent cheaper.

**Bentley Hotel** **Halaskargazi Cad 75, Harbiye ⓣ0212/291 7730, ⓦwww.bentley-hotel.com.** One of the first wave of retro-modernist hotels in the city, the Italian-designed *Bentley* offers minimalist urban chic in a convenient location between Taksim Square and upmarket Nişantaşı. White, beige and black are the tones of choice in the appealing rooms, each kitted out with flat-screen TVs and wi-fi. The suites on the top floor (a whopping 1360TL) have espresso machines and decent views over the

Bosphorus. There's also a gym and a sleek restaurant. 408TL

**Central Palace Hotel** **Lamartin Caddesi 18 ⓣ0212/315 5500, ⓦwww.thecentralpalace.com.** "Concept" hotel, with a healthy lifestyle the aim – which means no alcohol, organic steamed vegetables, an exercise bike in every room, Jaccuzis in the bathroom and hypo-allergenic bedding. All this goodness will likely be undone by a day tramping the polluted streets of the city, but if you're looking for faux-Ottoman luxury a minute's walk from Taksim Square, it's a good choice. 340TL

**Divan Taksim Suites** **Cumhuriyet Cad 49 ⓣ0212/254 7777, ⓦwww.divan.com.tr.** White blinds, white rugs, white furnishings, blonde-wood floors: this is Scandinavian-style minimalism in the heart of Taksim. The suites vary slightly, but all work on an open-plan scheme, with well-kitted-out kitchens off a spacious sleeping/dining/sitting area. The 110m square Bosphorus penthouse suite offers great views over the waterway and as much light as you can handle through its roof windows. All suites have large workstations and wi-fi, plus a music system and TV, so make sense for extended business stays if you're in this price bracket. Suites from 460TL.

**Marmara Hotel** **Taksim Square ⓣ0212/251 4696, ⓦwww.themarmara.com.tr.** This premier five-star, twenty-storey hotel right on Taksim Square, is one of İstanbul's landmark buildings. The 410 spacious and luxurious rooms all have great views over Beyoğlu and mix functional chic with old-fashioned, faux-Ottoman flourishes. Facilities include swimming pool, Turkish bath, spa and a number of restaurants – the best being the ground-floor *Marmara Tuti Cafe* for some serious people-watching (it's a haunt of the city's nouveau riche and other monied types) over coffee, pastries and Turkish sweets. For panoramic views over İstanbul, try the top-floor *Tepe Lounge*. Rooms 290TL, suites 630TL.

**Midtown Hotel** **Lamartin Cad 13 ⓣ0212/361 6767, ⓦwww.midtown-hotel.com.** Stylish yet functional hotel with crisp linen, wall-mounted flat-screen TVs and tea- and coffee-making facilities in the sizeable rooms –some with Bosphorus views. It's not the city's most characterful hotel and is aimed at businessman and groups rather than independent travellers, but there are good deals on offer and the attached restaurant (Turkish and international dishes) is pretty good, too. 205TL

**Sofa Hotel** **Teşvikiye Cad123 ⓣ0212/368 1818, ⓦwww.the dofahotel.com.** Not for the impecunious, the *Sofa*, housed in an attractive turn-of-the-nineteenth-century block, is one of those designer hotels that offer minimalist charm for maximum prices. That said, it's well located in the heart of chic Nişantaşı, the rooms are spacious, with natural-wood floors and restrained furnishings, the en-suite bathrooms feature rainshowers and herbal soaps, and there's a small fitness room and spa. 340TL

## Beşiktaş and Asian İstanbul

The suburbs across the water make an interesting alternative to staying in the city centre and are fairly easy to reach by bus or ferry. There are no budget options in **Beşiktaş** – you pay a massive premium for the waterfront locations here – but some cheap hotels in Asian İstanbul, in **Kadıköy** and **Üsküdar**, though they're unused to tourists.

### Beşiktaş

**Çırağan Palace Kempinski Hotel** **Çıragan Cad 84 ⓣ0212/258 3377, ⓦwww.ciragan-palace.com; see map, p.146.** Twelve suites in an elaborately restored Ottoman palace right on the European shore, with every luxury imaginable. For mere mortals, there are plenty of spacious rooms in the annexe. Rooms run from an exorbitant 800TL for a standard double to a ridiculous 60,000TL for the Sultan's Suite – and breakfast is extra. Guests at both have use of the several restaurants serving gourmet cuisine, large outdoor pool and health club. The Bosphorus-facing rooms have incredible views of this fascinating waterway.

### Asian İstanbul

**Eysan Hotel** **Rıhtım Cad 26, Kadıköy ⓣ0216/346 2440, ⓦwww.hoteleysan.com; see map, p.153.**

Built in 1928 and originally a military school, this faded four-star hotel is more or less opposite Kadıköy's ferry terminal, overlooking the traffic chaos on Rıhtım Cad and, beyond it, the bustling Bosphorus. On the plus side, the rooms are extremely large, with plenty of space for armchairs and desks, some of them the genuine 1920s artefacts. The bathrooms are clean, and the staff friendly, though they see relatively few foreigners outside of Grand Prix week. 130–150TL

**Yeni Saray Oteli** **Salmani Pak Cad, Çeşme Sok 33, Üsküdar ⓣ0216/310 9282, ⓦwww.yenisarayotel.com; see map, p.158.** Pleasant family-run hotel place in an area of the city few foreign visitors stay; it's just behind the Mihrimah Camii, above a *McDonald's*, more or less opposite Üsküdar's ferry terminal. Rooms are equipped with modern furniture, have a/c and double-glazing (essential for front rooms overlooking the busy street), and have a certain type of Turkish taste reflected in the oft-garish bedspreads (faux-leopard skin in one, tartan in another). The restaurant, bar, café and terrace overlook the Bosphorus. 90–120TL

## The Bosphorus

Although some way from the central İstanbul, the pretty suburb of **Kanlıca** does offer one considerably stylish – but expensive – option.

**A'jia** **Çubuklu Cad 27, Kanlıca ⓣ0216/413 9300, ⓦwww.ajiahotel.com at; see map, p.163.** This sixteen-room hotel, converted from the beautiful Ahmet Rasim Paşa *yalı*, has managed to retain its period elegance despite having received a full "white is right" minimalist-style makeover. The rooms on the top floor, built into the roof space, have delightful balconies with simply stunning Bosphorus views – and also offer the best value, with doubles at 510TL. The attached restaurant is also highly recommended, though the fish mains will set you back at least 40TL.

# 11

# Eating



Gourmets rank **Turkish food**, along with French and Chinese, as one of the three classic cuisines, which is great news for visitors to the nation's cultural capital, as the very best of it can be found here in İstanbul. The city's rich and varied cuisine derives from its multi-ethnic Ottoman heritage, when it was capital of an empire stretching from the Middle East to the Balkans and the Caucasus to North Africa. Turks in general, and İstanbullu in particular, are demanding when it comes to food, and want the freshest ingredients, the best service and, if possible, a little something extra than the person on the next table – maybe a bigger shot of pomegranate syrup in the salad or a few extra chillies to spice up their kebab. Fortunately for them, Turkey, with so many climatic zones and an important rural economy, produces a stunning array of **fresh fruit and vegetables** – the best of which find their way to the markets and shops of the metropolis. Fresh **fish** comes in from the nearby Black Sea, Sea of Marmara and Aegean, and the **lamb** is as succulent and the **yoghurt** as thick, creamy and delicious as you'd expect from a people who trace their origins back to Central Asian nomadic pastoralism.

İstanbul has eating places to suit every budget, though **prices** have risen across the board in recent years, even for the once ridiculously cheap staple, bread. A breakfast portion of the mouth-watering, crumbly cheese-pie *peynirli boreği* will cost around 3TL, a sesame-seed-coated bread ring or *simit* a third of that from a street vendor. Two lira will still get you a tasty take-out chicken-filled *döner* wrap, a couple more a hearty vegetable or pulse stew from a basic restaurant; fresh, oven-baked *pide* (Turkish-style pizza) will set you back around 5TL. By way of contrast, however, a latte will burn a 6TL hole in your pocket, whilst mains at a swish fusion-style joint in Beyoğlu or one of the upmarket Bosphorus fish restaurants will cost a minimum of 40TL and often considerably more.

Once there was a fairly firm line drawn between different kinds of eating establishment in Turkey, but this has broken down recently, particularly in İstanbul. The demarcation made here between the various eating places (and, indeed, the bars listed in "Nightlife") is far from precise, with many cafés serving full meals as well as snacks – by and large, if it's listed under restaurants, it's the kind of place where you'd sit down to an evening meal.

## Cafés, patisseries and cheap eats

Café society in İstanbul is as wide ranging as in any other European capital, with everything from traditional male-only teahouses to stylish (and expensive) café-bars – and an ever increasing number of multinational coffee chains. Most of the trendy café-bars are to be found in Beyoğlu, though there are a few

passable options in the tourist heartland of Sultanahmet. **Pastanes**, the Turkish take on the patisserie, are very popular with the locals and serve up all kinds of *baklava*, milk-based puddings and more familiar sweeties such as chocolate eclairs. **Borekçi** dish up different kinds of pastries, both savoury and sweet, and are particularly popular at breakfast time. **Çorbacis** specialize in different kinds of soup, popular both for breakfast in winter, for lunch or after a night out on the town.

There are plenty of places to find good-value meals in the city, often (though not always) unlicensed. Traditionally, a **lokanta** is a restaurant emphasizing *hazır yemek*, pre-cooked dishes kept warm in a steamtray, especially stews. Despite their often-clinical appearance, food at the best *lokanta*s can be the most delicious you'll have in the city. **Kebapcıs** and **köftecıs** specialize in the preparation of kebabs and *köfte* respectively, with a limited number of side dishes – usually just an array of salad, yoghurt and desserts. They vary enormously in quality but the best will make you realize why Turks are so passionate about bits of grilled meat. **Pidecis** concentrate on flat-breads topped with cheese, meat, vegetables and various combinations of them all, baked to perfection in wood-fired ovens. Nowadays, however, it's quite common to find establishments that combine elements of everything, often concentrating on *hazır yemek* for the lunchtime trade and knocking out kebabs and *pide* in the evening. These kinds of eating places can be found all over the city, though they are at a premium in Sultanahmet.



## Sultanahmet

The places listed below are marked on the map on p.54.

**Altın Kupa Şeftali Sok 6, off Yerbatan Cad ⓣ0212/519 4770. Daily 8am–midnight.** Just off the main tourist drag of Divan Yolu, this café-bar has been going since 1982 (and the property has been in the hands of the owner's family for generations) and knows exactly what its customers want. Sea bass or squid stew are two worthy mains, both served with rice, chips and salad (15TL). The *meze* (which include hummus, something of a rarity in İstanbul) are around 7TL and big beer will set you back 6.5TL – reasonable for this heavily touristed area.

**Buhara 93 Naklibent Cad 15/A 12 ⓣ0212/518 1511. Daily 8am–11pm.** Cavernous place, somewhat group-oriented and not exactly ideal for intimate dining, but doing a wide range of traditional fare including competitively priced kebabs (8TL and up) – hence it's consistently full of locals at lunchtime. There's a terrace with potted plants and great views.

**Çiğdem Patisserie Divan Yolu Cad 62 ⓣ0212/526 8859. Daily 8am–11pm.** For over forty years, the *Çiğdem* has been offering a good selection of both Turkish and non-Turkish pastries and sweets – plus fresh juices, coffee and tea. The *baklava* is as good as any in the area (5TL a portion), and the *sutlaç* (rice pudding) reliable.

**Doy Doy Sıfa Hamamı Sok 13 ⓣ0212/517 1588. Daily 8am–11pm.** A backpacker's institution (off Küçükayasofya Cad at the Hippodrome end), with a well-deserved reputation for cheap and well-prepared kebabs, *pide* and *sulu yemek*. Try the unusual *fıstıklı fırın beyti* (oven-cooked kebab with pistachios). Mains range from 5TL, and there are a few choices for vegetarians. Dining is on four floors, including a roof terrace with great views of the harbour and a night-time light show over the Blue Mosque. No alcohol, but there's a *şark köşesi* where you can while away the hours on cushions, puffing on a *nargile* or sipping a *çay*.

**Karadeniz Pide Salonu Divan Yolu Cad, Bıçkı Yurdu Sok 1 ⓣ0212/522 9191. Daily 10am–11pm.** Unremarkable-looking place with plastic tables and plates, but the food – particularly a good *kiremit kebap* (lamb cooked on a clay dish) – is very popular with locals. The *pide* are also excellent, and there's a choice of desserts – from *baklava* to rice pudding. Expect to pay around 6TL for a *pide*, a little more for grills and meat stews.

**Konyali Café Mecidiye Pavilion, Topkapı Palace ⓣ0212/513 9696. Wed–Mon 10am–5pm.** OK for coffee and pastries, not so for the canteen-style sandwiches and other fare –

## An A–Z of Turkish cuisine

**Appetiisers (meze)** Turkey is justly famous for its *meze*, in many ways the heart of the nation's cuisine. The best and most common include: *patlıcan salatası* (aubergine mash), *piyaz* (white haricot vinaigrette), *semizotu* (purslane weed, usually in yoghurt), *mücver* (courgette croquettes), *sigara böreği* (tightly rolled cheese pastries), *beyin salatası* (whole lamb's/sheep's brain), *turşu* (pickled vegetables), *imam bayıldı* (cold baked aubergine with onion and tomato) and *dolma* (any stuffed vegetable, but typically peppers or tomatoes).

**Baklava and pastry-based desserts** There are a variety of different *baklava*-related desserts, all permutations of a sugar, flour, nut and butter mix. The best is *antep fistikli sarması* (pistachio-filled *baklava*); *cevizli* (walnut-filled) *baklavas* are usually a little cheaper. The southeastern town of Gaziantep has the best reputation for *baklava*, where the emphasis is on butter and nuts rather than sugary syrup, so look out for dessert places with the name "*gaziantep*" in them. In recent years, *künefe* – the "shredded wheat" filaments of *kadayif* perched atop white cheese, baked in a shallow tray and soaked in syrup – has become ubiquitous as a dessert usually served in both *kebabcis* and *pide* places; both *baklava* and *künefe* are often served, luxuriously if not exactly healthily, with large dollops of ice cream.

**Bread (ekmek)** The standard Turkish loaf, sold from glass-fronted cabinets outside grocery stores across the city, is good if an hour or two old, but soon goes spongy and stale. Once thrown out, recent price hikes mean stale bread is often now toasted and dished up in cheaper *lokanta* and the like. Flat, semi-leavened *pide* bread is served with soup, at *kebapcıs* and during Ramadan. Unleavened *durum*, like a tortilla, are the wrap of choice in cheap *döner* joints. *Mısır ekmeği* (corn bread), a Black Sea staple, sometimes makes an appearance, as does German-style rye bread.

**Cheese (peynir)** There's far more to Turkish cheese than *beyaz peynir* (like Greek feta), a ubiquitous element of the standard Turkish breakfast. *Dil peynir* ("tongue" cheese), a hard, salty cheese that breaks up into mozzarella-like filaments, and the plaited *oğru peynir*, can both be grilled or fried like Cypriot halloúmi. *Tulum peynir* is a strong, salty, almost granular goat's cheese cured in a goatskin; it is used as a *börek* stuffing, although together with walnuts, it makes a very popular *meze*. *Otlu peynir* from the Van area is cured with herbs and eaten at breakfast; cow's-milk *kaşar*, especially *eski* (aged) *kaşar* from the Kars region, is also highly esteemed. These cheeses are often served at the buffet breakfasts of the more upmarket İstanbul hotels.

**Meat dishes (etli yemeği)** *Karnıyarık*, aubergine halves stuffed with a rich mince-filling, is a delicious staple, as is *güveç*, a clay-pot fricassee. *Hunkar beğendi* (beef stew on a bed of puréed eggplant and cheese) has its origins in Ottoman times and is a must-try. *Saray kebap* (beef stew topped with bechamel sauce, and oven-browned), *macar* (Hungarian), *kebap* (stewed meat and vegetables topped with mashed potato and cheese, then baked) are both standards. *Saç kavurma* is an inland Anatolian speciality made from meat, vegetables, spices and oil, fried up in a *saç* (the Turkish wok).

**Grilled meats (ızgarı)** Kebabs include the spicy *Adana,* with its sprinkling of purple sumac herb betraying Arab influence; *İskender kebap*, best sampled in Bursa, is heavy on the flat-bread and yoghurt. *Köfte* (meatballs), *şiş* (stewed meat chunks, usually mutton or beef) and *çöp* (bits of lamb or offal) are other options. Chicken (*piliç* or *tavuk*) is widely available, usually either as a skewer-cooked *şiş* or a breast fillet. Grilled dishes normally come served on a slice or two of *pide* with a raw

vegetable garnish. In some places, you can ask for a *durum*, when the meat and garnish are served in a flat-bread wrap. *Pirzola*, tiny lamb chops, are usually only available in *restoran*.

**Fish (balık)** Budget mainstays include *sardalya* (sardines – grilled fresh), *hamsi* (anchovies – usually fried) and *istavrit* (horse mackerel). *Mercan* (red bream), *lüfer* (bluefish) *kılıç* (swordfish) and *orfoz* (giant grouper) are highly prized and expensive. *Çipura* (gilt-head bream) and *levrek* (sea bass) are usually farmed and consequently good value – if less tasty. Fish, whatever its price, is generally simply prepared and grilled.

**Ice cream (dondoruma)** The genuine *Maraşlı döşme dondurma* (whipped in the Kahraman Maraş tradition – a bit like Italian *gelato*) is the ice cream of choice in İstanbul. That served with *baklava* in the better *pastanes* is usually Maraş. Upmarket parlours, selling every conceivable flavour of ice cream from ginger to mulberry, are now ubiquitous in the city.

**Milk-based puddings (muhallebi)** *Süpangile* ("süp" for short, a corruption of *soupe d'Anglais*) is an incredibly dense, rich chocolate pudding with sponge or a biscuit embedded inside. More modest dishes are *keşkül* (a vanilla and nut-crumble custard) and *sütlaç* (rice pudding) – one dessert that's consistently available in ordinary restaurants. The most complicated dish is *tavukgöğsü*, a cinnamon-topped morsel made from hyper-boiled and strained chicken breast, semolina starch and milk. *Kazandibi* (literally "bottom of the pot") is *tavukgöğsü* residue with a dark crust on the bottom – not to be confused with *fırın sütlaç*, which looks the same but is actually *sütlaç* pudding with a scorched top baked in a clay dish.

**Offal (cöp)** *Böbrek* (kidney), *yürek* (heart), *ciğer* (liver), and *koç yumurtası* (ram's egg) or *billur* (crystal) – the last two euphemisms for testicle, less commonly found of late – are just some of the more entertaining specialities, but far more readily available is *kokoreç*, seasoned lamb's intestines often cooked on a charcoal grill and available from street vendors.

**Salad (salata)** *Çoban* (shepherd's) *salatası* is the generic term for the widespread cucumber, tomato, onion, pepper and parsley salad (approach the peppers with caution); *yeşil* (green) salad, usually just some *marul* (lettuce), is only seasonally available. M*evsim salatası* or seasonal salad – perhaps tomato slices, watercress, red cabbage and lettuce hearts, sprinkled with cheese and drenched in dressing – resembles a Western salad and often accompanies a kebab meal.

**Soup (çorba)** The most frequently encountered soups are *mercimek* (lentil), *ezo gelin* (rice and vegetable broth – thick enough to be an appetizing breakfast), *paça* (trotters) or *işkembe* (tripe) soup laced liberally with garlic oil, vinegar and red pepper flakes, an effective hangover antidote/preventative.

**Steamtray dishes (hazır sulu yemek)** Dishes such as *kuru fasulye* (bean soup – rather like baked beans in tomato sauce), *taze fasulye* (French beans), *sebze turlu* (vegetable stew) and *nohut* (chickpeas) are usually found in *lokanta*s (and the home). Meaty favourites include *sebzeli köfte* (meatballs stewed with vegetables) and various types of chicken stew.

**Turkish Delight (lokum)** The best-known Turkish sweet, *lokum* is pretty much ubiquitous. In its basic form, it's just solidified sugar and pectin, flavoured (most commonly) with rosewater and sprinkled with powdered sugar. More expensive are versions liberally studded with nuts, usually either walnuts or pistachios. You might find a complimentary piece in your hotel room, but it's not traditionally found in restaurants or even *pastanes*.

but there's little other choice for refreshments inside the Topkapı Palace. Some compensation for the ridiculous prices is the terrace set amongst the palace gardens, with a great view over the Bosphorus.

**The Pudding Shop (Lale R estaurant) Divan Yolu Cad 6 ⓣ0212/522 2970. Daily 7am–11pm.** This Sultanahmet institution first opened its doors in 1957, and in the late 1960s became the meeting place for hippies and other travellers overlanding to India (see box, p.79). Times have changed but *The Pudding Shop* is still dishing up its signature rice pudding along with a wide array of traditional Turkish dishes. The food's not outstanding, but it's well located right on Divan Yolu, serves alcohol and has a unique place in the history of baby-boom generation travel.

**Sofa Mimarmehmet Ağa Sok 32, off Akbeyik Cad ⓣ0212/458 3630. Daily 10am–2am.** A world away from most of the places on Akbeyik Cad, this casual and relaxing place is run by the laidback bearded Sayfullah (also the chef). It serves up a good mix of Western grub such as pizza, salad bowls and sandwiches, and Turkish fare, including *köfte*, kebab and grilled fish. Mains from 8–18TL. There's a Happy Hour, outside of which small beers go for 5TL – not the cheapest hereabouts but worth the extra for the ambience.

**Sultan Pub Divan Yolu Cad 2 ⓣ0212/511 5638. Daily 9.30am–1am.** Pleasant but very touristy café-bar in a prominent position, with great views across to the Aya Sofya. There are tables outside in summer, from where you can watch the processions of fellow visitors troop by in endless columns. The food is both Turkish and international (mains 18–25TL), and there's plenty of cold beer on tap.

**Tarihi Sultahmet Köftecisi Divan Yolu Cad 4 ⓣ0212/511 3960. Daily 11am–11pm.** Longest established of three *köfte* specialists at this end of Divan Yolu, and frequented by Turkish celebrities (check out the framed newspaper clippings and Thank You letters on the tiled walls). A plate of tasty meatballs, pickled peppers, fresh bread and a spicy tomato sauce dip will set you back a bargain 8TL. Try and grab a table by the window in the upstairs salons, with views across to the Aya Sofya and Blue Mosque.

## Sirkeci

The places listed below are marked on the map on p.81.

**Kardelen Pub Muradiye Cad 3 ⓣ0212/522 8393. Daily 10am–2am.** Unpretentious and best of the cluster of *meyhanes* on this street near the train station, with an ivy-covered facade and zany tilted roof terrace. Hearty *mezes* from 4TL and grills around 9TL. Much beer and *rakı* are downed, especially when one of Istanbul's Big Three football teams are on the huge TVs.

**Konyali Ankara Cad 233 Mon–Sat 7am–8pm.** Excellent pastry and cake shop opposite the station, frequented by the areas businesspeople, who eat their breakfast standing at the marble-topped counters. An affordable 6TL for coffee and pastry.

## The Grand Bazaar and around

Unless otherwise stated, the places listed below are marked on the map on p.90.

**Ağa Kapısı Nazir Izzet Efendi Sok 11 ⓣ0212/519 5176. Daily 8am–midnight.** Tucked away on a dead-end street just below the Süleymaniye Camii and frequented mainly by local traders, young headscarved women students (it's unlicensed) and their lecturers, the *Ağa Kapısı* has the picture window beyond compare, giving a stunning panoramic view down over the Galata Bridge, the mouth of the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus beyond. The food is simple and cheap – try the *gözleme* (a kind of *paratha* stuffed with goat's cheese) and a glass of tea, traditional Turkish style, or slash out on one of their Ottoman-style sherbet drinks. Smokers may well opt to simply puff away on a *nargile*.

**Bedesten Café Cevahir Bedesteni 143–151, Kapalı Çarşı ⓣ0212/520 2250. Mon–Sat 8.30am–7pm. See map,** p.92. This is the best café in the Grand Bazaar, an oasis of peace and tranquillity away from the main thoroughfares (look out for the two giant *alem* – the brass crescent- and star-topped finials that adorn mosque domes and minarets – and an even bigger portrait of Atatürk). The food is quality, with delicacies such as scrambled omelette *menemen* (8TL) or a full Turkish breakfast. Lunch mains include Turkish ravioli (*manti*) in garlic and yoghurt sauce (13TL), and there's a great selection of cakes. Not only is it very tasteful and atmospheric, it even has its own toilets, a rarity amongst bazaar establishments. The manager's experience on

cruise ships and hotels has given him an eye for detail, and you can enjoy a selection of magazines including *Time Out Istanbul* and *Conde Naste*.

**Erenler Çay Bahçesi** **Ali Baba Türbe Sok Medressi, Yeniçeriler Cad 36/38 ⓣ0212/528 3785. Daily: summer 7am–3am; winter 7am–midnight.** In the courtyard of a three-hundred-year-old *medrese* (religious school), this cheap-and-cheerful bazaar worker-oriented *nargile* café does water-pipes for 8TL and tea for less than a lira.

**Fes Café** **Ali Baba Türbe Sok 25/7A, off Nuruosmaniye Cad, Kapalı Çarşı ⓣ0212/ 526 3071. Daily 8am–1pm. See map, p.92.** Trendy mix of traditional and new, with designer tables spilling out onto a quiet cobbled street. There's a big flat-screen TV, mellow piped music and, despite its location near the bazaar, the majority of the clientele are mainly well-heeled Turks. Sandwiches are not cheap at 12TL but are wholesome and filling; pastas cost a little more but are equally satisfying. There's also a good selection of home-made cakes, best washed down by a fresh juice. There's a hole-in-the-wall branch in the Grand Bazaar on Hacılar Cad 62, which keeps bazaar opening hours – both branches front for the Abdulla shop.

**Şark Kahvesi** **Yağlıkçılar Cad 134 ⓣ0212/512 1144. Mon–Sat 8.30am–7pm. See map, p.92.** Funky and long-established café, with barrel-vaulted exposed brick ceilings and bizarre cut-outs of Ottoman figures decorating the walls. With latte at 6TL and fresh juices at 5TL, it's a shade cheaper than its rivals.

**Subaşı Lokantasi** **Nuruosmaniye Cad 48, Çarsı Kapı ⓣ0212/522 4762. Mon–Sat 11am–5pm.** Behind Nuruosmaniye Camii, just inside the main entrance of the Grand Bazaar, this spit-and-sawdust place (with real sawdust) serves excellent lunchtime food to the market traders, far better than anything else in the same price range in the area. Highly rated by many Turkish newspapers (their restaurant reviews adorn the walls), you should go early (noon–1pm), as it gets packed and food may run out. Mains are between 5 and 11TL a portion depending on the amount of meat in them – try the stuffed peppers or delicious *karnı yarık* (mince-topped aubergine).

**Sultan Café** **Hacılılar Cad 40-48, Kapalı Çarşı ⓣ0212/527 0145. Mon–Sat 8.30am–7pm. See map, p.92.** Set in a vaulted niche off one of the bazaar's busiest streets, this trendy place dishes up great latte (6TL) and paninis for 15TL. It also does crêpes, toasted sandwiches and salad bowls.

**Tarihi Kuru Fasuliye Süleymaniye Erzincanlı Ali Baba** **Siddik Sami Onar Cad 11 ⓣ0212/513 6219. Daily 9am–7pm.** In the gorgeous Süleymaniye Camii complex, with tables set out on the precinct between the mosque and *medrese* behind, this simple place serves up some of the tastiest beans in town (and they're not out of a can) for a bargain 4TL – though beware the hot chilli pepper draped innocently atop your steaming bowl of pulses.

**Van Kahvaltı Sofrası** **Vatan Cad 37/A ⓣ0212/621 299. Open 24hr.** Van, in the ethnically Kurdish southeast of the country, is famous for its namesake lake, a breed of white cat with different coloured eyes– and its breakfast. For 13TL, you can enjoy a generous portion of honey and fresh cream, Van's famous herb cheese, *otlu peynir*, along with more common fare such as olives, cucumber, salami and tomato – and a big mug of tea. They also do more unusual specifically Kurdish dishes such as *murtağa* (a kind of sweet omelette) and assorted kebabs.

**Vefa Bozacısı** **Katip Çelebi Cad 104/1 ⓣ0212/519 4922. Daily 7am–midnight.** Worth a look just to see the interior: old tiled floor, dark-wood shelves, ornate Victorian-style mirrors, 1920s light-fittings, and bottles of vinegar with label designs unchanged for decades (Atatürk was here in 1937). The *boza*, a cloudy, viscous drink made by fermenting bulgur wheat with sugar and water and best drunk in the winter months, is an acquired taste, but they also do ice creams.

## The northwest quarter

**Arnavut Köfteci** **Mursel Paşa Cad 149, Balat. Mon–Sat 4.30am–6.30pm. See map, p.102.** Although not quite so long-established as the late nineteenth-century Greek building in which it's housed, this one-room café has been around for fifty years or more – the owner a fair bit longer. A motley array of vintage formica-topped tables, each a different pastel hue, are usually packed with down-to-earth locals, though an occasional crop of trendy media types turn up from time to time. The *köfte* are delicious, more so when washed down with a glass of

*ayran*. There's not a lot else on the menu, so if you're feeling brave, you may want to try the *iskembe çorbası* (tripe soup).

## Beyoğlu, Taksim and the waterfront districts

### Isitklal Caddesi and around

The places listed below are marked on the map on p.128.

**Canım Ciğerim** **Minare Sok 1, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/252 6060. Daily 10am–midnight.** Just off happening Asmaaltı Geçiti, this is a small, trendy and very popular place with set menus of chicken, lamb or liver *şiş* skewers served with fresh flat *lavaş* bread and four varieties of salad, plus grilled vegetables (12TL per person).

**Kafe Ara** **Tosbağa Sok 8/A, off Yeniçarşı Cad, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/245 4105. Mon–Thurs 8am–11pm, Fri 8am–midnight, Sat & Sun 10am–11pm.** Great place tucked away just off Galatasaray Meydani, with a raft of tables out in the alley and a lovely dark-wood bistro-style interior lined with black-and-white images of Ara Güler (see p.132). A large, tulip-shaped glass of Turkish tea is a reasonable 2.5TL, big bowls of salad 10–15TL. The clientele are generally prosperous, but it's not overly posh and is the perfect spot to rest your feet after the rigours of shopping on İstiklal Cad.

▲ Kafe Ara

**Kallavi Nargile Café** **Kavalli Sok 2, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/245 9154. Daily 11am–1am.** A rooftop venue before they became so trendy. Take the elevator up to this calming, wood-walled and -floored café for a coffee (6TL), a puff on a *nargile* or a simple snack (sandwiches, pastas and burgers as well as Turkish fare) and enjoy fine views over the Bosphorus. There's no alcohol, but there is a giant TV for football matches.

**Leb-i-Derya** **Kumbaracı Yokuşu 115/7, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/293 4989. Daily 11am–4am.** Funkier, with a younger clientele than its sister venue in the *Richmond Hotel*, this place is café/restaurant/bar rolled into one. The picture-windowed lounge, balcony and small roof terrace all look out onto where the Golden Horn meets the Bosphorus. The food menu is similar to the Richmond *Derya* (see p.200) but around twenty percent cheaper – though drinks are the same price.

**Markiz** **İstiklal Cad 360–2, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/251 7581. Daily 10am–10pm.** Restored to its former glory, this patisserie is worth visiting for its exquisite Art Nouveau faïence-tile murals alone – *L'Automne* and *Le Printemps* by Annoux. The delightful Art Deco glasswork is a bonus. Unfortunately, it's now in the hands of a coffee chain, and the food and service are no more than average. Expect to pay around 12TL for a coffee and cake.

**Nizam Pide** **Büyükparmakkapı Sok 13, off İstiklal Cad, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/249 7918, ⓦwww.nizampide.com. Open 24hr.** Excellent *pide* (5TL and up), from the traditional *kuşbaşı* topped with diced meat to the more exotic mushroom-topped variety. Also does great soups and beans in a rich tomato sauce. A second branch on Kalyoncu Kulluğu Cad, behind Nevizade Sok in the Fish Market, is regularly rated one of the top ten *pide* outlets in Turkey.

**Pia** **İstiklal Cad, Bekar Sok 4, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/252 7100, ⓦwww.piasarikahve.com. Daily 10am–2pm.** Delightful split-level café attracting a trendy clientele and much-favoured by elegant single women. There are tables out on the street in summer, protected from passing pedestrians by potted plants, and the interior is cosy and welcoming, with a wrought-iron spiral staircase leading to the upstairs gallery. The food is well prepared and reasonable value, with grilled salmon at 18TL or a vegetable crêpe 8TL. The drinks, even mineral water, are served in slim glasses and topped with lemon and a cherry.

**Saray** **İstiklal Cad 102–104, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/292 3434. Daily 8am–11pm.** Best value of İstanbul's upmarket patisseries, serving mouth-watering profiteroles. Established in 1935, the emphasis is on

classic Turkish desserts such as *fırın sütlaç* (baked rice pudding), *irmik helvası* (semolina with nuts) and *baklava*-type sweets, including wonderful *fıstık sarma* (pistachios packed in a syrup-drenched pastry roll) – cakes cost 4–6TL – though it also serves food, including the breakfast treat, *menemen*, and grills and soups. It's a/c, spotlessly clean and spread over several floors with, typically, the (immaculate) toilets on the top one.

**Simit Saray İstiklal Cad, Beyoğlu. Daily 7am–10pm.** Part of a franchise chain, this has a great location opening onto the southern end of İstiklal Cad, right next to the Tünel entrance. Great for a snack or breakfast – try a cheese-filled *simit* or the mouth-watering *gül boreği*, a cheese-, spinach- or potato-filled pastry (2TL). The latte is rich and creamy, and at 4TL, cheaper than elsewhere in Beyoğlu.

## Galata, Karaköy and Tophane

Unless otherwise stated, the places listed below are marked on the map on p.128.

**Fasuli İskelesi Cad 10–12, Tophane ☎0212/243 6580. Daily 7am–11pm. See map, 124.** Housed in an attractive nineteenth-century corner-plot building, this establishment turns the humble haricot bean into an art form. Made from the freshest ingredients, including butter imported from the owner's native Trabzon on the Black Sea and the beans from İspir, high in the Pontic Alps, they are deliciously creamy. There are plenty of other dishes to choose from, including tender *pirzola* (lamb cutlets) for 15TL, and you can finish off with the unusual *Laz Boreği,* an eastern Black Sea variation of *baklava*. The location's good, too.

**Galata House Café Galata Külesi Sok 61 ☎0212/245 1861. Tues–Sun noon–midnight.** A café housed in the former British Prison, serving good coffee, home-made *böreks*, cakes and jams. Full meals are available (mains 15–20TL) including both Turkish and Georgian cuisine. Often closes for two weeks in summer.

**Galata Konak Patisserie Haci ali Sok 2, Galata ☎0212/252 5346. Daily 9am–9pm.** Just down from the Galata Tower, this stylish café, set in a lovingly restored old building, dishes up delicious lattes (with amaretti biscuits) and a range of tempting cakes and desserts. Be warned, though: refreshments taken on the café's rooftop terrace (reached by an antique lift) are considerably more expensive than if you sit downstairs – definitely a case of pay per (the admittedly great) view, down to the Golden Horn.

**Güney Kuledibi Sah Kapisi 6, opposite Galata Tower ☎0212/249 0393. Mon–Sat 7am–10pm.** Once a workers' favourite, it has lost something of its character since the square was gentrified, but remains excellent value with *pides* for 5TL and generous portions of *sulu yemek* (stews) for the same price. The *saray kebap* (beef stew topped with bechamel sauce and oven-browned) has to be tasted to be believed. No alcohol.

**İstanbul Modern Café Meclisi-i-Mebusan Cad Antrepo 4, Tophane ☎0212/292 2612. Daily 10am–midnight. See map, 124.** A strange mix here: chic, designer surroundings (what else would you expect in the city's showcase contemporary gallery) and superlative views from the funky terrace right onto the Bosphorus, but service can be so slow it feels more like a self-service canteen. The menu is a blend of international and Turkish, with mains from 18TL. It's worth paying the pricey 8TL for a latte to sit on the terrace and watch the ships go by.

**Karaköy Gülloğlü Rihtim Cad 17, off İskelesi Cad 10–12, Karaköy ☎0212/293 0910. Daily 10am–midnight. See map, 124.** Gaziantep, in the distant southeast, is the nation's pistachio and *baklava* capital. This family concern started out there in 1871, moved to the big city in 1949 and haven't looked back since – the İstanbul branch is the original of a very popular countrywide chain. Buttery, nut-filled *baklava*, often eaten with a generous dollop of chewy *Maraş* ice cream, takes pride of place and draws in sweet-toothed families from across the city.

## Taksim Square and around

The places listed below are marked on the map on p.134.

**Banyan Abdi İpekçi Cad 40/3, Nişantaşı ☎0212/219 6011. Daily 10.30am–2am.** The emphasis of this branch of upmarket *Banyan* is Mediterranean-style food, which, as this is one of the most exclusive streets in town, means a rocket and goat's cheese salad will set you back 16TL and a detox salad a mere 26TL. But if you want to see

where the İstanbul "haves" spend their salaries, put it on your tick-list.

**The House Cafe** **Atiye Sok 10, Nişantaşı ⓣ0212/259 2377. Daily 8am–midnight.** A large communal table dominates proceedings here, and despite the upscale neighbourhood, it's friendly and welcoming. The house burger is very popular, the coffee good and the bar prices not bad for this über-rich part of the city. There's also a branch in a charming domed Ottoman building attached to the Teşvikiye mosque, very popular in summer with its outside tables.

## Ortaköy

The places listed below are marked on the map on p.146.

**Banyan** **Salhane Sok 3, off Muallim Naci Cad ⓣ0212/259 9060. Daily noon–2am.** Asian cuisine is the theme here, everything from Indian to Vietnamese, which makes it stand out from most café-restaurants in the city – and from its Nişantaşı sister venue (see p.193). The views of Ortaköy mosque and the Bosphorus Bridge from the pretty terrace are stunning, but you pay for them, with most mains over 40TL.

**House Café** **Salhane Sok 1, off Muallim Naci Cad ⓣ0212/227 2699. Mon–Thurs & Sun 9am–2am, Fri & Sat 8am–2am.** Like the nearby *Banyan*, this place also has another outlet in posh Nişantaşı (see above). The food is largely aimed at young, affluent and westernized Turks, with (admittedly upmarket) burgers and pizza a couple of menu staples – along with an expensive (40TL) Sun brunch.

**Lavanta** **Mecediye Köprü Sok 16 ⓣ0212/227 2995. Daily 10am–2am.** Opposite Örtaköy's funky Baroque mosque, this fusion cuisine-oriented café dishes up chicken satay in a chilli sauce for 22TL, a delicious house pizza for 21TL, a house burger for a little less, and meatballs, salad and chips for 15TL. New in Ortaköy, they have been doing brisk business in İzmir's exclusive Alçatı resort for years. It's a great spot to hang out and is certainly more affordable than many places in this pricey Bosphorus-front suburb.

## Asian İstanbul

The places listed below are marked on the map on p.153.

**Baylan** **Muvakkithane Cad 19, Kadiköy ⓣ0216/336 2881. Daily 10am–10pm.** This famous patisserie is a must for nostalgia freaks, with its 1950s dark-wood and chrome frontage. The trellis-shaded garden area is popular with mums and their offspring, many of whom tuck into traditional ice creams or plates of pastel-coloured macaroons. Evidence of the Christian Armenian origins of the café are the liqueur chocolates on sale here.

**Divan Pastanesi** **Bağdat Cad 361, Kadiköy ⓣ0216/345 4066. Daily 7am–11pm.** Very classy joint selling the best pastries and cakes, and with a good line in attractively boxed sweets and *lokum* (Turkish Delight). Sit outside and watch the Bağdat people as you indulge. Other branches across the city.

## The Bosphorus

The places listed below are marked on the map on p.163.

**Ali Baba Köftecisi** **Arnatvutköy Cad 104, Arnatvutköy ⓣ0212/265 3612. Daily 10am–11pm.** Cheap-and-cheerful pine-clad place specializing in generous portions of *köfte* and *fasuliye* (haricot beans topped with sliced onion) for around 12TL. Many famous visitors have given their seal of approval to this modest Arnavutköy institution – just check out the signed photos of footballers, politicians and pop stars on the walls. No alcohol.

**Aşşk** **Muallim Naci Cad 170/A, Kuruçeşme ⓣ0212/265 4734. Tues–Sun 9am–10pm.** On the waterfront but hidden behind a delightful Art Deco-style building now housing a Makro supermarket, and at its best in summer when the tables in the cobbled courtyard afford fine vistas of the Bosphorus. Food is Mediterranean, organic and expensive, but the setting makes it worthwhile – and it's licensed.

**Lucca** **Cevdet Paşa Cad 51/B, Bebek ⓣ0212/257 1255. Daily noon–2am.** This may be a casual café-bar but that's upmarket Bebek "casual", and females in particular won't feel at home unless they've spent serious time achieving the "look". That said, the interior's a fun mix of the genuinely old (check out the nineteenth-century ceiling reliefs), the retro ('50s-style prints) and the ethnic (African masks). You can read the morning paper here or listen to the hippest Bebek society sounds until the early hours.

**Sütiş** **Sakip Sanacı Cad 1/3, Emirgan ⓣ0212/277 5960. Daily 9am–11pm.**

Established in 1953, this quality chain (there's a branch on Istiklal Cad) is set in a perfectly located old wooden *köşk* with plate-glass windows and a huge decking area out to one side, shaded by four giant plane trees. Light meals such as *köfte* are around 10TL, and a decent coffee and dessert will set you back the same amount. There are great views of ships passing by on the Bosphorus.

## Restaurants

The restaurant scene in İstanbul is, as to be expected in such a huge and fast developing city, very varied. **Meyhanes** (taverns) have a long history in this city and are more popular now than ever, with hordes of İstanbullu going out on the town, especially at weekends, to eat their way through reams of *meze* (starters) and fish mains and down copious amounts of *rakı* before singing and dancing along to roving bands of Roma musicians. Less boisterous than a *meyhane*, the simpler **restoran**, serve little more than grilled meats, salads and an array of *meze* to accompany the alcohol. The more upmarket ones specialize in dishes with their origins in the finest Ottoman cuisine, or reflect the changing times and serve fine Mediterranean or Asian-influenced cuisine. There are an increasing number of places offering **International cuisine**, though the vast majority of İstanbullu still (understandably) prefer their native dishes. The few restaurants listed here that are unlicensed are marked as such – and note that those in the Grand Bazaar are not open in the evening.

The liveliest restaurants and *meyhanes*, catering largely to theatre/cinema-goers and young İstanbullu heading out on the town, are in **Beyoğlu** and **Taksim**, especially on Nevizade and Asmalımescit *sokak*s. **Kumkapı**, southwest of Sultanahmet and almost on the shores of the Sea of Marmara, is famed for its *meyhanes*, over fifty of them lined up either side of a narrow street running down from Kumkapı Meydanı. Wandering gypsy musicians and the drunken carousing of hordes of İstanbullu revellers make for a fun meal out in either of these areas. Trendy **Ortaköy**, fronting the Bosphorus, is another option – especially if you're up for one of the nearby glitzy waterfront clubs (see p.211). The eating places in **Sultanahmet** cannot compare in terms of quality or entertainment to those across the Golden Horn, but if you're looking for somewhere convenient after a heavy day's sightseeing, there are a few honourable exceptions. For something more adventurous, however, you can combine your evening meal with an evening cruise and head north along the Bosphorus to a fancy fish restaurant, or cross the strait to the Asian suburbs of **Üsküdar** and **Kadıköy**.

### Vegetarian food

Given the quality and quantity of fresh fruit and vegetables (not to mention pulses) produced in Turkey, things should be pretty good for **vegetarians**. Unfortunately, those tasty-looking vegetable dishes on offer in the steamtrays in most *lokantı* are usually made with lamb or chicken-based broth; even bulgur and rice may be cooked in meat stock, as can lentil soups. You might ask "*İçinde et suyu var mı?* " ("Does it contain meat stock?"). In traditional restaurants, strict vegetarians should confine themselves to *mezes* (there's loads of choice here), salads, omlettes, *böreks* and the cheese-topped varieties of *pide* – or head for one of the vegetarian establishments in "Listings".

## Sultanahmet

The places listed below are marked on the map on p.54.

**Ahırkapı Balıkcısı** **Kerestici Hakkı Sok 46 ☎0212/518 4988. Daily noon–midnight.** A real salt-of-the-earth place right on the fringes of Sultanahmet's main tourist area. The dining area is tiny, with just a couple of tables inside and, in summer, a few more on the narrow cobbled street outside – and the nearest WC is across the street in the mosque. The food makes up for the lack of frills, though, as the fish is fresh-caught and far better value than in the city's more upmarket fish restaurants. The old guy who runs it sold postcards outside the Blue Mosque for years and is a real character. Licensed. Mains from 20TL.

**Amedros** **Hoca Rüstem Sok 7, Divan Yolu ☎0212/522 8356. Daily 11am–1am.** A sophisticated café-restaurant a world away in ambience to the tourist dives that dominate Sultanahmet's dining scene. It's best in summer, when the action moves to the white-tableclothed tables in the narrow pedestrian street. The interior manages to be both stylish and homely, and the food is good, too – a mixture of European (try the Flame Marmer steak) and traditional Anatolian (the *testi* kebab, a succulent lamb and vegetable stew slow-cooked in a sealed clay pot, is a good bet). The service is attentive without being obsequious and the whole place is very professionally run. Licensed. Mains from 20TL.

**Balıkçı Sabahattin** **Seyit Hasan Koyu Sok 1, Cankurtan ☎0212/458 1824. Daily 11am–1am.** Fish restaurant in the refreshingly down-to-earth streets beside Cankurtan station, just a 5min walk from touristy Sultanahmet. It's not cheap (it's the in-place for monied locals), but is about as atmospheric as you can get, with vine-shaded tables set out in a narrow alley (in summer) or a wood-floored dining room in an old wooden house (winter). Starters begin at 5TL, mains 30TL and up, with seasonal, locally caught fish on the menu. Licensed.

**Dubb** **Incili Çavuş Sok ☎0212/513 7308. Daily noon–3pm & 6–10.30pm.** A funky spot with one Indian and two Turkish chefs serving up authentic Subcontinent dishes in a chic yet ethnic setting. The rooms, spread over several floors, are small, and there's a roof terrace and tables on the street. Delicious *samosas* and *pakoras* go for 6–8TL, vegetable curries 15TL – or try the set menu's vegetable *thali* (30TL), washed down with a refreshing glass of *lassi* (as good as you'd expect when wonderful Turkish yoghurt is the prime ingredient).

**Kathisma Restaurant** **Yeni Akbıyık Cad 26 ☎0212/518 9710. Daily 10am–11pm.** Fish and meat dishes (16–22TL), excellent sweets to follow, and a wine menu, all served in a cavernous bare-brick dining room. It's touristy but quite a few locals get in here, too.

**Mosaik Restaurant** **Divan Yolu Cad, İncili Çavuş Sok 1 ☎0212/512 4177. Daily 9am–midnight.** A well-established restaurant in a nicely restored, late nineteenth-century house, all wooden floors, kilims and subdued lighting. The tables out on the quiet side street are great in the warmer months, and there's an atmospheric, separate downstairs bar (with small beers at 7TL). Serves a range of less common Turkish dishes, including Armenian, Greek and Kurdish specialities.

**Rami Restaurant** **Utangaç Sok 6 ☎0212/517 6593. Daily noon–11pm.** Restored Ottoman townhouse full of antiques and original artworks. Offers a mixture of stews, *mezes* and oven-baked dishes – including some fish. Decent enough food but with most mains 30TL and up, it's expensive. The real draw is the roof terrace, with romantic views at night over the floodlit Blue Mosque. It's opposite the Arasta bazaar, near the Mosaic Museum. Licensed.

## Sirkeci and Eminönü

The places listed below are marked on the map on p.81.

**Hamdi Et Lokantası** **Kalçin Sok 17 Tahmis Cad, Eminönü ☎0212 528 0390. Daily 11am–midnight.** The uninspiring facade of this five-floor joint fronting the square in Eminönü belies the quality and value of the food on offer inside. Best bet to sit is the terrace, which offers great views over the Golden Horn, Galata and the Bosphorus beyond. Tender, charcoal-grilled kebabs of various kinds form the mainstay of the menu, but it's also a good place to try another southeastern Turkish speciality, *lahmacun*, a thin *chapati*-type bread smeared with spicy mincemeat. The *baklava* desserts are also top-notch. The clientele is a mix of local shopkeepers, businessmen

and tourists. Mains from 10TL, though *lahmacun* is only 3TL (two suffice most people for a meal). No alcohol.

**İmbat Hudavendigar Cad 34 ⓣ0212/520 7161. Daily noon–1am.** The roof-restaurant of the *Orient Express* hotel offers a mixed menu, including new takes on Turkish classics, such as hot *tulum* (a goat's cheese cured in a goatskin bag) served in breadcrumbs as a *meze*. A *meze* plate, mainly Mediterranean vegetables in olive oil, is enough for two people (12TL). Grills start from 15TL, though the fish is rather more expensive. A real draw are the great views over Gülhane Parkı to the Topkapı Palace and Aya Sofya, and across the Bosphorus. The terrace itself a mass of potted oleander, geraniums, hollyhocks and pansies, and the diners are not just hotel guests. Licensed.

**Levi Et Lokantası Tahmis Kalçın Sok, Çavuşbaşı Han 23/6 ⓣ0212/512 1196. Mon–Fri 8am–6pm.** Small first-floor place, overlooking the square to the west of the Mısır Çarşısı. If you want to sample kosher Sephardic food, prepared mainly for İstanbul's Jewish community (though the place is also much frequented by Jewish visitors from all over the world), then this is the place to come. Unusual dishes (mains 12–18TL) include *ağristada* (meatballs in bechamel sauce), *patlican reynada* (aubergine and mince fritters) and *armide de domat* (a purée of rice and tomatoes). The (Muslim) owner is very friendly. Wine served.

**Pandeli's Mısır Çarşısı 51, Hamıdıye Cad ⓣ0212/527 3909. Mon–Sat 11.30am–4pm.** Through the main entrance of the Spice Bazaar on the shore side and back towards the doorway; on your right is a staircase leading up to the restaurant. Over seventy years old, decorated throughout with blue and white tiling and run by Greek and Turkish owners, this licensed place is known particularly for its sea bass. İstanbullu are divided as to the quality of the food, but everyone is unanimous about the truculence of the ageing waiters. Visitors have included Tony Curtis and Daniel Day-Lewis. Main courses from 18TL.

**Paşazade Sirkeci İbn-I Kemal Cad 13 ⓣ0212/513 3757. Daily noon–1am.** Well-run faux-Ottoman place, one of a number of restaurants in the little streets to the west of Gulhane Parkı, all offering quite a different feel to the tourist meat-markets around Akbıyık Cad. The interior may verge on twee, but the service is good, the food (try the lamb blanquette with quince) tasty and good value (mains from 12TL). It's traditional Turkish cuisine with a twist, there's plenty of choice for vegetarians, and in warm weather the outside tables make for great people-watching. Licensed.

## The Grand Bazaar and around

Unless otherwise stated, the places listed below are marked on the map on p.90.

**Darüzzafiye Sifahane Sok 6, Beyazit ⓣ0212/511 8414. Daily noon–11pm.** The most distinctive choice if you're looking for a sit-down lunch whilst exploring the Süleymaniye mosque and its environs – this was once the kitchens that formed part of the Süleymaniye *külliye* (mosque complex). The long, narrow dining hall, with its domed roof, is the most atmospheric, especially as the courtyard garden area is looking rather careworn. The food is fairly standard despite the fact the restaurant's ethos is reviving Ottoman-style cuisine. The house meatballs are OK, the almond-flavoured milk-pudding *keskul* rather better. No alcohol. Mains 12–22TL.

**Hatay Sofrası Ahmediye Cad 44/A, Aksaray ⓣ0212/531 3333, ⓦwww.havuzlurestaurant.com. Mon–Sat 9am–midnight, Sun 8am–1pm.** This cavernous, over-lit but spotless emporium may not suit those in search of a romantic dinner, but it does serve up some of the best and most unusual dishes in İstanbul. There's a strong Arab influence to the mind-bogglingly extensive menu (the Turkish province of Hatay, on the southeastern Mediterranean seaboard, is still claimed by Syria as its own). The hummus is served warm and liberally sprinkled with pistachios, and the dip *muhammara* (a spicy mix of breadcrumbs, walnuts, tomato and hot pepper) is delicious; the whole chicken roasted in salt (*tuzda tavuk*) needs to be ordered a couple of hours ahead. There's even a range of home-made delicacies to takeaway. Not licensed.

**Havuzlu Gani Çelebi Sok 3, Kapalı Çarşı ⓣ0212/527 3346. Mon–Sat 10am–5pm. See map on** p.92**.** Appealing Grand Bazaar restaurant, with Ottoman-style decor and white tablecloths on dark-wood tables laid out beneath a barrel-vaulted ceiling. Offers a good range of kebabs (the *Iskender* is

recommended) and *hazır yemek* dishes. Brisk service, tasty food and reasonable prices (kebabs around 10TL). No alcohol.

**Kaburga Sofrası Şekerci Sok 8, Aksaray ☎0212/532 7373. Daily noon–11pm.** This unassuming little place specializes in the cuisine of the Mardin region, right on the Syrian border in Turkey's southeast, where Arabic and Kurdish are as widely spoken as Turkish. The *kaburga,* after which the place is named, is the main attraction – tender rib of lamb stuffed with delicately spiced *pilaf* rice – though you'll need to ring a day in advance to ensure that they can prepare this unusual dish. For *meze*, there's *içli köfte*, spiced meatballs wrapped in a bulgur-wheat casing. Usually fried, here they are steamed to a mouth-watering tenderness, or try the *mumbar*, intestines stuffed with rice and meat, or a salad drenched in sour pomegranate juice. A fixed meal (more than you can eat) is 35TL; otherwise, mains are 12–19TL. Licensed.

**Kalamar Çapariz Sok 15, Kumkapı ☎0212/517 1849. Daily noon–2am.** Run by a Kurd from a village on the shores of distant Lake Van, the *Kalamar* is a decent choice on the main restaurant drag in Kumkapı. They do get groups (the menu is in five languages and there are pictures of many of the dishes in case you don't speak any of those), but on weekend nights at least, ninety percent of the revellers are Turkish. Cold *meze* start at 6TL, farmed-fish mains 18TL and fresh-caught fish (such as sole and bluefish) 25TL and up. Service is efficient (it has to be with half the customers dancing around the tables, and serenading gypsy bands roaming at will) and (alcoholic) drinks reasonably priced.

**Kör Agop Ördekli Bakkal 7–9, Kumkapı ☎0212/517 2334. Daily noon–2am.** Third-generation Armenian-owned fish restaurant, one of the oldest in town (since 1938) and hugely popular. Offers a standard selection of seasonal fish, *mezes* and salads, accompanied by a *fasil* band in the evening. The set menu, which includes *meze,* a fish or meat main, fruit and unlimited local drinks, is 50TL – good value for a reliable night out.

**Olimpiyat 2 Samsa Sok 7, Kumkapı ☎0212/517 2240. Daily noon–2am.** A favourite among locals for its excellent service, guaranteed high quality and large range of fish, from bluefish to sea bass. Mains 25TL and up.

**Padaliza Off Yağlıkcılar Cad, Kapalı Çarşı. Mon–Sat 10am–5pm. See map, p.92.** The best-value eating establishment in the Grand Bazaar itself (near the main entrance, at the entrance to İç Cebeci Hanı) in a beautifully restored, exposed-brick, barrel-vaulted *han*. The waiters are white-shirted, black-tied and black-trousered but are friendly rather than formal, and dish up delicious stuffed vegetables (5TL) and a variety of kebabs, including *kağıt kebabı,* cubes of lamb and vegetables oven-baked in greased-paper for 10TL. There are some tables in the bustling alley outside. There's no alcohol: not a bad thing, seeing as you need to keep your wits about you in the bazaar.

## The northwest quarter

The places listed below are marked on the map on p.102.

**Asithane Kariye Hotel, Kariye Camii Sok 18 ☎0212/534 8414. Daily 11.30am–11.00pm.** Garden-restaurant next door to the Kariye Museum. It's expensive, but you may feel like splashing out for good service and food in such a peaceful location. The menu is described as nouvelle Ottoman cuisine – plenty of stews ranging from 18TL for the vegetarian option to 34TL for more elaborate meat-based dishes. Try the *hükar beğendi* (tender lamb with aubergine purée) or Nıbaç, a spiced-lamb, meatball and carrot stew flavoured with coriander, ginger, cinnamon and pomegranate syrup, topped with crushed walnuts. Meals served on a lovely chestnut-shaded terrace swamped by roses, accompanied by classical Turkish music.

**Ottoman Antakya Antep Murfağağı Kadır Has Cad 9, Çibali ☎0212/631 7567. Daily noon–midnight.** A little off the beaten track, overlooking the Golden Horn east of the Atatürk Bridge, this fine restaurant offers some unusual, Middle Eastern-style dishes from the southeast of Turkey. The mains tend to be kebabs (16TL), but the starters are more unusual: *bakla ezme*, a traditional Antakya dip of puréed broad beans with olive oil; *çokelek salatası,* a spicy cheese salad; and *abugannaç,* a dip of aubergine, tomato, pepper, garlic and sour pomegranate sauce amongst others. It's decent value, with wine by the glass at 7TL and a double *raki* 8TL, and well worth seeking out for a break from mainstream Turkish or International cuisine.

**Zeyrekhane İbadethane Arkası Sok 10 ⓣ0212/532 2778. Daily 9am–11pm.** Wonderful location in the shadow of the Zeyrek Camii, with great views down over the Golden Horn. Operated by the wealthy Koç family, it's appropriately expensive and exclusive. The lamb fillet on mashed aubergine (*Beğendili Kusu Heleosu*) or the *Osmanlı güveç*, an Ottoman-style chicken stew cooked in a clay pot and served with *pilaf* rice, are both good choices. Mains 20–30TL, and wine an outrageous 18TL per glass, but these prices don't stop lots of Turks frequenting the place. Eat on the terrace in summer, inside under a vaulted brick roof at dark wood tables in winter. Lunchtime sandwiches are around 15TL, or try the *Kayseri mantısı* (Turkish ravioli served in yoghurt) for the same price.

## Beyoğlu, Taksim and the waterfront districts

### İstiklal Caddesi and around

The places listed below are marked on the map on p.128.

**360 Mısır Apartmanı 311, İstiklal Cad ⓣ0212/251 1042, ⓦwww.360istanbul.com. Mon–Thurs noon–4pm, Fri noon–4pm & 6pm–2.30am, Sat 6pm–4am, Sun 6pm–2.30am.** The fusion cuisine of this ultra-hip and popular rooftop bar/café/restaurant has received mixed reviews of late, so you might be better off sticking to a drink (see p.206). If you do give it a try, there's everything from Wasabi beef noodles to pizza. Mains will sting you at least 40TL.

**Çezayir Hayriye Cad 16 ⓣ0212/245 9980. Mon–Thurs & Sun 9am–2am, Fri & Sat 9am–4am.** This stylish restaurant sprang up before the boom in minimalist chic, and is no worse for that. Set in a beautifully restored turn-of-the-twentieth-century townhouse, it is soothingly atmospheric, with stripped-pine doors, space-enhancing mirrors, chandeliers and other refreshingly anti-modernist features. The food (modern Mediterranean/Turkish) is generally good, too. Best bet for a reasonable night out is one of the fixed menus – the cheapest option is for two drinks to be included 45TL.

**Çhanga Siraselviler Cad 47 ⓣ0212/251 7064. Mon–Sat 6.30pm–2am (Nov–June).** Opened in 1999, this was one of the pioneers of fusion food in the city. That it has survived is a testament to its quality and indeed has spawned the equally successful *Müzedechanga* out in Emirgan (see p.203), which takes over when *Changa* closes for the summer. You can watch the chefs prepare your food in the kitchen under the glass floor beneath you and admire the replica Eames chairs and original artworks by some of Turkey's leading contemporary artists. With a chef from New Zealand and an array of dishes – from duck *confit* to fillet of beef marinated in soy sauce – don't expect anything too Turkish – but then that's not the point of *Changa*. Mains 40TL and up.

**Çokçok Meşrutiyet Cad 51 ⓣ0212/292 6496, ⓦwww.cokcok.com.tr. Daily noon–2am.** Designer Thai restaurant with a well-deserved reputation for both style and quality. Relax in the cocktail lounge before your meal and try one of the unusual concoctions on offer – Rain Odaiba is flavoured with ginger and coriander. Ingredients are brought in from Thailand and the chef is Thai, so this is the real deal and the lunchtime special set menu (noon–6pm) is great value at 20TL. Mains 20–25TL.

**Cumhuriyet Meyhanesi Sahne Sok 47, Balık Pazarı ⓣ0212/293 1977. Daily 10am–2am.** Excellent selection of *mezes* and fish dishes from 19TL a head, in a restaurant located at the heart of the Fish Market. Sit upstairs for a bird's-eye view of the stalls below and try to avert your eyes from the offal shop across the alleyway whilst you're eating. Atatürk himself ate and drank here, and it still has plenty of atmosphere, especially when the *fasil* band are doing their rounds.

**Degustasyon Sahne Sok 41, Balık Pazarı ⓣ0212/292 0667. Daily 10am–1am.** Long-established Fish Market restaurant, spread over three floors, concentrating on typical *meyhane*-fare. There are well over thirty cold starters alone, from 4TL. A lot of thought has been put into this menu, though naturally enough, given its location, fish (priced per kilo, from 15TL) is the main of choice, with standard grills mixing with more unusual dishes such as *buğlama*, steamed fish in a rich sauce. Chicken and meat dishes are cheaper – try the tender chicken in soy sauce for 10TL. Lesser-known Turkish wines available from 30TL per bottle, though most Turkish diners hit the *rakı*.

**Fesleğen İstiklal Cad, Küçük Parmak Sok ⓣ0212/251 7942. Mon–Thurs & Sun 11.30am–midnight, Fri & Sat 11.30am–2am.** Arty (note the smattering of posters and flyers) place with a cosy dark-wood interior and tables out on the street in summer. It's better value than many crossover restaurants – try the *köfte* with wedges, yoghurt and tomato sauce (12.5TL), spinach and basil ravioli, fresh basil tortellini or chicken salad with fresh basil (al 9.5TL). "*Fesleğen*" means "basil" in Turkish, and everything bar the beer seems to come with the fragrant herb.

**Ficcin İstiklal Cad, Kallavi Sok 13 ⓣ0212/245 4858, ⓦwww.ficcin.com. Tues–Sat 8am–10pm.** Unpretentious place on this quiet side street offering some unusual and substantial dishes. Try *ficcin* itself, a kind of hearty, Caucasian meat pie, or the *çerkez mantası*, a ravioli-style dish where the pasta is stuffed with tomato and served in a yoghurt sauce. Soups, including a tasty rocket-based one, and starters from 3TL, mains around 6TL. Wine and beer are both reasonably priced, too. If you're not hankering for sophistication, this place is well worth a try, especially in the warmer months when there are plenty of tables out on the street. Also does breakfast.

**Hacı Abdullah İstiklal Cad, Sakızağacı Cad 17 ⓣ0212/293 8561. Daily 11am–10pm.** An İstanbul institution, this is one of the best traditional (established in 1188) restaurants in town and sports a high-ceilinged atrium salon at the back. Main courses from 9TL – try the *hunkar beğendili kebap* (beef stew on a bed of aubergine and cheese purée) and the *ayva tatlı* (stewed quince with clotted cream). It makes a great lunchtime stop rather than an evening-out venue, as no alcohol is served.

**İmroz Nevizade Sok 24.** This Greek-owned İstanbul legend has been dishing up reasonably priced fish dishes (mains from 15TL) since 1942. Spread over three floors and both sides of the busy pedestrian thoroughfare, it is perhaps the liveliest of the fish restaurants in the Balık Pazarı area. Choose from a bewildering array of *meze* brought around on a tray. Despite the excellence of the food, most locals come here to smoke, drink and talk (increasingly vociferously as the *rakı* kicks in), so don't bother if you're looking for a quiet tête-à-tête with a loved one.

**Leb-i-Derya Richmond İstiklal Cad 227 ⓣ0212/252 5460, ⓦwww.lebiderya.com. Mon–Thurs & Sun 11am–2am, Fri & Sat 11am–3am.** Designer restaurant/bar on the top floor/roof of the plush *Richmond Hotel*. It's all blonde-wood and white trim – the gleaming white central bar takes pride of place, though the stunning views down over the Bosphorus are even more impressive. Lunches include a range of grills from 18TL, pastas from 15TL and giant salad bowls in the same price range. Evening meals are rather more expensive. Booking advised, especially at weekends.

▲ Leb-i-Derya Richmond

**Lokanta & Nu Teras Meşrutiyet Cad 149 ⓣ0212/245 6070. Mon–Thurs & Sun 6.30pm–2am, Fri & Sat 6.30pm–4am (June–Oct).** Summer venue of the famed *Lokanta*, housed in the same building (same phone number and menu), this has now become an established and deservedly popular rooftop restaurant. Needless to say, the fine views come with a price – expect to pay 40TL and up for a main. *Lokanta* is simply furnished as befits a new take on a traditional Turkish eatery.

**Mikla Marmara Pera Hotel, Meşrutiyet Cad 167/185 ⓣ0212/293 5656. Daily noon–2am.** The food served here is as simple and elegant as the venue's Scandinavian-inspired interior (fittingly so, as the chef is Turkish/Swedish in origin). The food is Turkish/Mediterranean fusion – try the succulent lamb shank with seasonable summer vegetables and parsley. Mains are from 40TL, good-quality local wine by the glass 20TL. Dress "casually upscale" as their website advises, if only to ensure you don't encounter problems passing through the ground-floor hotel security.

**Nature and Peace** **İstiklal Cad, Büyükparmakkapı Sok 21 ⓣ0212/252 8609. Mon–Thurs 11am–11.30pm, Sun 1–11.30pm.** Earthy vegetarian restaurant on a lively street, where specialities include green lentil balls, falafels and nettle soup, from around 9TL a dish. Some chicken dishes served, too; the only alcohol available is wine. The café can feel cramped when busy.

**Parsifal** **Kurabiye Sok 13 ⓣ0212/245 2588, ⓦwww.parsifalde.com. Daily 11am–11pm.** Sophisticated, inexpensive menu blending Turkish and international styles, with an imaginative range of non-meat dishes, such as leek and soya burgers, and mouth-watering spinach pie. It's been around since 1996, and proprietor Ayfer Oğulları knows her business, and has created a homely, bistro-style atmosphere from the long, narrow dining area.

**Refik** **Sofyalı Sok 10–12, Tünel ⓣ0212/245 7879. Mon–Sat noon–midnight, Sun 6.30pm–midnight.** Modest *rakı*-infused Turkish joint, meeting point for local intellectuals, specializing in Black Sea cuisine. *Kara lahana dolmasi* is an unusual (for İstanbul) stuffed cabbage dish, popular with the locals. Refik Baba, the good-natured owner, likes to chat in numerous languages, though he doesn't speak much of any. Set menu 50TL.

**Rejans** **Emir Nevruz Sok 17, off İstiklal Cad ⓣ0212/244 1610. Mon–Sat noon–3pm, Sun 7pm–midnight.** This famous establishment was founded by White Russians in the 1930s and thrives on its nostalgic reputation. It's somewhat shabby and staid, but has earned a new lease of life due to the increasing number of nouveau riche Russian visitors with cash to spare. Considering the quality of the food, it's not too expensive. Main courses (barbecued salmon, grilled quail) start from 15TL, best eaten accompanied by the excellent lemon vodka.

**Zencefil** **Kurabiye Sok 3 ⓣ0212/244 8234. Mon–Sat 11am–midnight.** The ever-changing menu includes vegetarian versions of various Turkish dishes, and Western-style meals such as vegetarian lasagne and quiche – from as little as 5TL– plus some chicken and fish specials, great salads, home-made breads, herbal teas, mint lemonade and local wines. The courtyard area is a particularly enticing place to relax and enjoy your food.

## Taksim Square and around

The places listed below are marked on the map on p.134.

**Bursa Hacibey Kebacısı.** **Teşvikiye Cad 156/B, Nişantaşı ⓣ0212/231 7134. Daily 11.30am–10pm.** Nişantaşı's well-heeled inhabitants are not going to put up with second-rate food, and this is a prime example – it's *the* place to try Bursa's famous *İskender kebap*, tender slices of grilled lamb in a rich tomato sauce and served on a bed of unleavened *pide* bread, at 18TL only a fraction more than in Bursa itself, and not much more than a couple of lattes in this neck of the woods. The only drawback is that it's not licensed.

**Hünkar** **Mim Kemal Öke Cad 21, Nişantaşı ⓣ0212/343 0443. Daily noon–midnight.** Classic Ottoman/Turkish cuisine at its best. Originally opened in 1950 in ultra-orthodox Fatih, across the Golden Horn in the Old City, it (wisely, given Nişantaşı's prosperity) moved to its present location in 2000. The trademark dish is *hünkar beğindi*, literally admired by the Sultan, with tender lamb served on a bed of smoky, mashed aubergine. The *irmik helvasi*, a deliciously sweet semolina and almond dessert, is done particularly well here. There's a decent wine list in addition to the extensive menu. Evening reservations recommended.

**Musafir** **Recepepaşa Cad 7, Taksim ⓣ0212/235 2741. Daily 11am–11pm.** The long, narrow dining area of this Indian restaurant is decked out with the usual "Indian restaurant abroad" trimmings (prints of elephants, Hindu deities) but is stylish enough, and in summer there are a few tables out on the street. Service can be slow, and it's not cheap (mains around 20TL), but the food is very well prepared and authentic tasting, and there are plenty of dishes to choose from – with the *biryanis* being particularly good.

**Zeugma** **Aydede Cas 18/B, Talimhane, Taksim ⓣ0212/235 6162. Daily 7am–10pm.** Simple, unpretentious grill place specializing in kebabs. All the usual suspects (*Urfa*, *Adana*, etc) are here, along with more unusual dishes such as *kaburga* (spare ribs). It's cheap for this corner of Taksim, has a few tables set out on the street and, unusually for a *kebap* restaurant, is licensed, so you can enjoy a beer (or even wine) with your meal. It also does a decent range of *meze*. Mains from 10TL.

## Beşiktaş

The places listed below are marked on the map on p.146.

**Hanedan Çiğdem Sok 27 ⓣ0212/259 4017 ⓦwww.hanedanrestaurant.com. Daily noon–2am.** Large, fairly formal establishment serving meat dishes downstairs – the roast lamb is especially good – and fish (all fresh-caught and charged per kilo according to season) and seafood upstairs. Popular with locals and tourists both for its reliable food, served with abundant fresh *pide* bread, and convenient location on the front next to the ferry jetty – the window tables afford good views of the Bosphorus. Expect to pay 50TL and upwards for a fish meal with drinks.

**Tuğra Çıragan Palace & Kempinski Hotel, Çaragan Cad 84 ⓣ0212/259 0394. Daily 7–11pm.** Ottoman restaurant with one of the most spectacular settings in the city, providing a stunning view over the Bosphorus. Expect to pay Western prices – 50TL and up for a main course alone – though these include unexpected menu items such as *Çerkez tavuğu* and a laden dessert trolley. Dress to impress.

**Vogue Beşiktaş Plaza A Blok, Kat 13, Spor Cad 92 ⓣ0212/227 4404 Daily noon–3pm & 7pm–2am, plus Sun brunch 10.30am–4pm.** A "concept" restaurant from the Doors group, this trendy top-floor, white-and-chrome designer joint has some of the best views in the city, across the Golden Horn to Sultanahmet and up to the first Bosphorus bridge. The menu is Turkish/fusion plus a well-regarded sushi selection, and a cool bar with a vast array of wines, cocktails and more mundane drinks. With background, DJ-spun music ranging from classical to pop and plenty of tables outdoors in the warmer months, this is a great place for a special night out – mains from 40TL.

## Asian İstanbul

**Çiya Sofrası & Kebapçi Güneşlibahçe Sok 43, Kadıköy ⓣ0216/330 3190. Daily 10am–midnight. See map, p.153.** A very well-regarded place on a pleasant pedestrianized street. "*Çiya*" means "mountain" in Kurdish, though the inspiration for the food here comes from many different corners of this vast country (try the *perde pilaf*, a delicately spiced and pan-crusted rice dish from the far southeast). The place positively bustles, with brisk and friendly staff adding to the pleasure of eating here. *Çiya* has been so successful the owners have opened another place, the *Çiya Kebapçı*, opposite. It boasts a huge oven ideal for *lahmacun* and the house Çiya kebab is tender meat coated with crushed pistachio and walnut, rolled in a thin unleavened bread and then baked – delicious. It's very popular with Turks and the sizeable local expat community alike.

**Huzur (Arabin Yeri) Salacak Iskelesı 20, Üsküdar ⓣ0216/333 3157. Daily noon–2am. See map, p.158.** Run by a group of Arabic-speaking Turks from the Hatay, serving grilled fish or seafood with salad for a reasonable 25TL. This long-established restaurant has a rather faded charm, a sound pedigree and undeniably wonderful views of the Kız Kulesi and the European side at sunset.

**Kanaat Lokantası Selmanipak Cad 25, Üsküdar ⓣ0216/341 5444. Daily 6am–11pm. See map, p.158.** One of the city's more famous *lokanta*s, established in 1933, featuring copies of İznik-tile panels from the Selimiye Camii in Edirne and a copper chimney-piece. This huge, absolutely spotless and bustling place is excellent value and offers a range of twenty cold starters for 5TL and the same number of hot for a little more – the *Çerkez tavuğu* (Circassian chicken in walnut sauce) is divine. Mains are from a bargain 8TL and include some of the best *pirzola* you'll find anywhere. The desserts are equally magnificent and include fruits such as fig, quince or apricot stuffed with nuts and topped with cream (6TL). No alcohol.

**Yanyalı Fehmi Lokantası Yağlıka İsmail Sok 1, off Soğütlüçeşme Cad, Kadıköy ⓣ0216/336 3333. Daily 9.30am–10.30pm. See map, p.153.** Established back in 1919 by refugees from Greece, this well-run place serves up some of the best food on the Asian side of the Bosphorus – and there's an incredible variety to choose from, with twenty types of soup alone, including non-standards such as okra or spinach. The *çömlek* kebab – meat, aubergine, beans, peppers, onion and garlic oven-cooked in a clay pot – is delicious (10TL). Or try the Persian-style chicken, including a *pilaf* containing parsley, nuts and egg. Desserts include *kabak tatlası* (candied courgette), delicious when, as here, it's done well. No alcohol.

## The Bosphorus

The places listed below are marked on the map on p.163.

**Ayder Balik** **Rumelikavak İskele Cad 2, Rumeli Kavağı ⓣ0212/218 3434.** Atmospheric place next to the landing, where you order fish specials off a big tray and eat on the terrace right by the water's edge. *Meze* from a very reasonable 5TL, farmed fish such as sea bream is 15TL a portion, whilst caught fish start at double that.

**Kıyı** **Kefeliköy Cad 126, Tarabya ⓣ0216/344 57, ⓦwww.kiyi.com.tr. Daily noon–2am**. Restrained mix of old (wood-panelling) and new (exposed ventilation system) interior, enhanced with superb prints by Ara Güler (see p.132) and examples of contemporary Turkish art. Cold *meze* range from 6 to 16TL, fish mains (grouper, turbot, pandara and the like) around 35TL a head, and wine by the glass 12TL.

**Kordon** **Kuleli Cad 51, Çengleköy ⓣ0216/321 0475. Daily noon–midnight.** Stylish fish restaurant in a restored distillery, attached to the equally chic *Sumahan on the Water* hotel (see p.168). The indoor dining area is atmospherically lit, and the views from the tables outside (summer only) over the Bosphorus are wonderful. The fish is carefully selected and lovingly prepared (there's everything, depending on season, from bonto to bluefish and swordfish to turbot), though not cheap at often over 100TL a kilo. The array of *meze* is less than in many places – quality rather than quantity is the rule here.

**Körfez** **Körfez Cad 78, Kanlıça ⓣ0216/413 4314.** The fish here is all fresh caught and not from a fish farm, so expect to pay a hefty 100TL or so for a full meal with wine. The grouper baked in a casserole with olives is just one of the more unusual fish dishes served up in this excellent establishment.

**Müzedechanga** **Sakip Sabancı Cad 22, Emirgan ⓣ0212/323 0901. July–Sept Tues–Sun 10.30am–1am.** Designed by the Autobahn group, this funky eatery is located inside the Sakip Sabancı Museum. The summer-season offshoot of Beyoğlu's *Changa*, it serves up Turkish/Mediterranean fusion cuisine in a stylish but unstuffy environment – goatskin-covered bar stools mix easily with stripped-wood floors and retro '50s-esque light fittings. There's a nice terrace with the inevitable Bosphorus views. Mains from 25TL, plus a good wine list.

**Parkfora** **Muallim Naci Cad 134, Kuruçeşme ⓣ0212/265 5063. Daily noon–midnight.** Right on the Bosphorus in the grounds of immaculate Cemil Topuzlu Parkı, this sophisticated fish restaurant sports dark-wood floors, white tablecoths and a glorious veranda giving onto the water; the roof terrace is equally impressive. The city's rich and sometimes famous arrive here in top-of-the-range motors, and consequently it's very expensive, with a seafood pancake at 25TL, rocket salad 16TL and local wine 17TL a glass. Fresh-caught fish are around 140TL per kilo, easily enough for two.

**Vira Vira** **Arnatvütköy Cad 53, Arnatvütköy ⓣ0212/257 1805. Daily 11am–2am.** Spread over three floors, this popular and affordable – cold *meze* (3–16TL), fish mains (from 35TL), wine (a reasonable 40TL a bottle) – Bosphorus-front restaurant has a roof terrace, a veranda with potted-plants giving onto the esplanade, and a pleasing dining room with a wood-beam ceiling for cooler weather.

**Yedigün** **Rumelikavak İskele Cad 27, Rumeli Kavağı ⓣ0212/242 6420.** Unlicensed but makes up for it in character. The owner played for Galatasaray back in the '60s, and the *Yedigün*'s wood-panelled walls are decorated with posters of teams ranging from Paris St Germaine to Glasgow Rangers and you can eat a fixed-menu meal including salad, chips, *sigara boreği* (cheese pastries), shrimps, mussels and fish for 20TL.

# 12 Nightlife

The vast majority of İstanbul's best **bars**, **clubs** and **live-music venues** are concentrated in and around **Beyoğlu**, particularly on bustling İstiklal Caddesi – where the gamut runs from smoky, thumping blues clubs to swanky roof terraces – and many night owls are now consequently choosing to stay in this happening part of the city. The Bosphorus waterfront in **Ortaköy** and **Kuruçeşme** boasts some of the glitziest clubs around, places where you'll rub shoulders with the city's nouveau riche and wannabe celebrities, dance to the "best" Euro and Turkish pop and stagger back to your hotel with a massive hole in your trip budget. There are more venues across the water, in the more unassuming Asian suburb of **Kadıköy** – but bear in mind the hassle of getting back. **Sultanahmet** may well be the historic heart of the city but is pretty much a desert in terms of nightlife.

A night out in İstanbul can **cost** as much as London or New York, particularly if you head up to exclusive rooftop joints or down to the Bosphorus waterfront clubs. The cheapest large beer is 5TL, a small one at least double that in one of the upmarket clubs, and cocktails, imported spirits and the like are exorbitant. Probably the best-value night-out is at a **meyhane**, or tavern, where you listen to a gypsy *fasil* band and enjoy a multi-course meal (with free drinks if you go for the fixed menu), or a **Türkü bar**, where the beer is a little over the odds but there's no cover charge.

By and large, once you're out of Sultanahmet, the vast majority of the people you'll be talking to, drinking with and dancing alongside will be İstanbullu. Usually a friendly, outgoing and gregarious lot, part of the fun of a night on the town is discovering more about them and their city – not as impossible as you might think, as many speak excellent English. And even if they can't, you can always link arms and dance the *halay*.

## Tickets and listings

**Tickets** for many events, sporting as well as music, are available from specialist booking agency **Biletix** (☎0216/454 1555, ⓦwww.biletix.com), either online or from outlets across the city – most usefully for visitors, from the Ada bookshop on İstiklal Caddesi. Bigger venues such as Babylon have both an online and venue-based booking service; otherwise, buy your tickets at the door.

For **magazine listings**, the monthly *Time Out İstanbul* (8.5TL) is the best bet. Rather less useful is the bimonthly *İstanbul The Guide*, a glossy that's OK for listings details of bars but doesn't really cover events. Otherwise, check ⓦwww.pozitif-ist.com or the posters and flyers on and around İstiklal Caddesi. **Cornucopia**, a glossy bimonthly covering the Ottoman arts scene, auctions, galleries and exhibitions, is available from bookshops that stock foreign-language newspapers and publications.

# Bars

Despite the (at least nominally) Muslim faith of the majority of its inhabitants, İstanbul is far from dry. Away from conservative Islamic areas such as Fatih and Eyüp, you'll find **bars** ranging from the downright seedy to the achingly chic. In practice, most visitors, exhausted after a day doing the sites, tend to drink near their hotel, which often means Sultanahmet. Here, though, the bars are tourist-oriented and pretty dull, with the only other drinkers either fellow tourists or locals who work in the tourist trade. Across the Golden Horn, however, lies buzzing Beyoğlu, which is where you should head for a real night out: a variety of bars – including many of the rooftop drinking establishments that have become so popular of late – line the lively streets and alleys leading off İstiklal Caddesi. **Kadıköy**, on the Asian side of the Bosphorus, has a couple of alternative drinking holes.

The line between İstanbul's bars and cafés is blurred, so many of the places listed below also serve food and coffee, often until late. Equally, many of the establishments listed under "Cafés" on p.186 also serve alcohol. The only true "bars" (not listed here) are men-only drinking dens in the more unfashionable and less-touristed parts of town. Here, groups of men congregate to drink beer and *rakı*, smoke, gossip and, if it's on the ubiquitous TV, watch football.



## Sultanahmet

The places listed below are marked on the map on p.54.

**Bodrum Bar** **Cnr Divan Yolu Cad & Kazim İsmail Gürkan Cad 13. Daily 10am–midnight.** Small, unremarkable basement bar, but one of the few options in the area for a late-night drink.

**Cheers** **Divan Yolu Cad 66.** It's been around on busy Akbıyık Cad long enough to know what it's doing – knocking out reasonably priced beer to a mix of impecunious backpackers, strays from the street's posher establishments attracted by a (sometimes) lively atmosphere and locals working in the many tourist establishments hereabouts. Very popular when there's big-screen sport to be watched.

**Cozy Pub** **Divan Yolu Cad 66 ⓣ0212/520 0990. Daily 10am–2am.** Situated on a prominent corner plot, this pleasant dark-wood bar has tables out on the street in the warmer months – great for people-watching on hectic Divan Yolu. A large beer is 7.5TL, not bad for the location, a glass of local wine 9TL. There's a very Western-slanted food menu, with salads, pastas for 13TL, and a big-mixed *meze* plate, ample for two, for 15TL.

**Orient Youth Hostel Bar** **Yeni Akbıyık Cad 13.** Rooftop bar at the hostel, with a cheap menu and good views of the Bosphorus and Sea of Marmara. Frequented by travellers from surrounding hostels in the evening, but, naturally enough, only likely to appeal to backpackers or those looking to relive those rucksack-encumbered days on the road.

**Sultan Pub** **Divan Yolu Cad 2 ⓣ0212/528 1719. Daily 10am–1am.** Pleasant but touristy café-bar in a prominent position, with great views across to the Aya Sofya. Offers Turkish and international dishes for 18–25TL, but it's better to stick to the ice-cold beer.

## Beyoğlu

Unless otherwise stated, the places listed below are marked on the map on p.128.

**5.Kat** **Soğancı Sok 7, off Sıraselviler Cad ⓣ0212/293 3774, ⓦwww.5kat.com. Mon–Fri 10am–2am, Sat & Sun 10am–3am.** In fashionable Cihangir, this is a sumptuous bar/dinner/dance club with a great reputation and even better views over the Bosphorus through the floor-to-ceiling windows or from the rooftop terrace bar. The owner was a noted film actress and – along with her mum – still runs the place. It's that kind of slightly offbeat joint, with special evenings covering everything from ethnic-cuisine tasting to listening to after-dinner monologues by celebrity "guests". Dining gives way to dancing as the evening progresses.

**45'Lik** **Yeni Çarşıa Cad 60 ⓣ0212/249 9727. Daily noon–2pm.** Venue concentrating on

## Alcohol

Alcohol in Turkey has become **expensive** of late, mainly because of inordinately high taxation (eighty percent), and is now little, if any, cheaper than elsewhere in Europe – and in some of the more upmarket establishments in İstanbul, it can be outrageously expensive. Efes Pilsen, the most popular **beer** (*bira*), is generally well regarded – in most cafés and restaurants, it comes in bottles, either 33cl in the more upmarket places, or 50cl (5TL) in down-to-earth joints; bars and clubs often have it on draught. Tuborg, the other home-grown beer, is not so popular and less widely available, though some people swear by it. Foreign beers are now widely available in İstanbul, but you'll pay at least a third premium for the dubious privilege of drinking Corona, Bud or Heineken.

The Turkish national aperitif is **rakı**, not unlike Greek *ouzo* but rougher and stronger, usually drunk over ice and topped up with bottled water. The best brands are Yeni and Tekirdağ, both 45 percent proof. It's the favourite tipple for Turkish men (and an increasing number of women) in *meyhanes* (taverns) and is the ideal accompaniment to plates of *mezes* and fish. Expect to pay between 6 and 12TL for a double, according to the salubriousness of your surroundings. Be warned – it's deceptively easy to drink, very easy to overdo and carries a high hangover risk.

Turkish **wine** (*şarap*), from vineyards scattered across western Anatolia between Cappadocia, the Euphrates Valley, Thrace and the Aegean, is often better than average. It has become the drink of choice for the middle classes, especially "modern" women, but has become correspondingly expensive – expect to pay at least 40TL for a drinkable 70cl bottle in a modest restaurant. Safest bets are the wines manufactured by Doluca (try the Villa or more expensive Antik) and Kavaklidere (Angora red and Çankaya white). Imported wines are affordable at supermarkets but prohibitively priced in restaurants. A glass of modest wine in a cheaper café-bar will set you back 7TL and up.



rock (no live bands) with a grungy feel, situated on the İstiklal end of this alternative street. If you tire of the gloomy interior, there's a pleasant garden area out back, and it rivals the *Pasific* (see p.208) for the cheapest beers around.

**360 Mısır Apartmanı 311, İstiklal Cad ☎0212/251 1042, ⓦwww.360istanbul.com. Mon–Thurs noon–4pm, Fri noon–4pm & 6pm–2.30am, Sat 6pm–4am, Sun 6pm–2.30am.** Set in one of İstiklal Cad's most attractive nineteenth-century apartment blocks, with a stunning interior of plate glass and bare brick, and (natch) panoramic views over the city, this rooftop bar/café/restaurant has commanded more than its fair share of attention. It is the venue of choice for cashed-rich İstanbullus and foreigners alike, but a drink here will set you back far more than a meal in many places in the city, and if they don't like the look of you, you won't even get in.

▲ 360

**Atlantik Pub Nevizade Sok 27. Daily 10am–2am.** Great place to nurse a big (70cl) Efes beer (6TL) and watch the good-time-seeking hordes pour down the alley.

**Badehane General Yazgan Sok 5 ☎0212/249 0550. Daily 9am–2pm.** Long-established and very popular small winter venue that spills out onto the alley in a big way in the summer. Crowded with students and alternative types, it serves cheap beer; people-watching and occasional live bands (usually winter only) provide the entertainment. If you're not in the big-money, rooftop-drinking league, this is one of the best places in Beyoğlu.

**Büyük Londra Oteli** **Mesrutiyet Cad 117 ⓣ0212/245 0670. Daily noon–11pm.** The bar of this unspoilt hotel has avoided the modernization programmes that ruined the interiors of so many of Beyoğlu's *fin-de-siècle* buildings in the '70s and '80s, long before retro was cool in this part of the world. Whilst many of them attempt to recreate the feel of distant times, the *Büyük Londra* doesn't have to – it's still all dark, ornate wood, brocade and velvet drapes. You wouldn't want to spend all evening here, but it's worth popping in for an early (and reasonably priced) drink or two and absorbing the atmosphere before heading off to livelier places.

**Buz** **Abdi İpekçi Cad 42/2, Teşvikiye ⓣ0212/291 0066. Daily 10.30am–midnight. See map, p.134.** Trendy posh bar/café best sampled at lunchtime as part of a Nişantaşı shopping expedition. Dishes vary from stuffed pitta breads and burgers to rocket salads and seafood. At night, music and cocktails supersede the food.

**Café Smyrna** **Akarsu Cad 29, Cihangir ⓣ0212/244 2466. Daily 9am–2am.** The clientele are a trendy, well-heeled set, enjoying the laidback feel of the long, narrow interior with its motley array of mirrors and retro collectibles. In summer, there are a few tables on the street. Like many of the city's café-bars, you feel equally at home here nursing a coffee or sinking a beer – plus there's some decent, if pricey, food on offer.

**Enginar** **Şark Kapısı Sok 4 ⓣ0212/251 7321. Daily noon–2am.** Dark-wood café-bar opening out onto the square at the foot of the Galata Tower, and more relaxed than many of the venues on and around İstiklal Cad. Dishes up decent Italian and Mexican cuisine, but equally good for a lunchtime or early evening drink.

**Etap** **Büyük Parmak Sok 28, off İstiklal Cad ⓣ0212/245 1750. Daily 10am–2pm.** Simple drinking den for daytime shoppers and night owls on this club-lined street. It has a friendly atmosphere, and there's draught Efes Pilsen for a reasonable 5TL, as well as simple snacks. Makes a good choice if you're later hitting one of the many clubs hereabouts.

**James Joyce Irish Pub** **Irish Centre, Balo Sok 26 ⓣ0212/224 2013. Mon–Thurs & Sun 1pm–2am, Fri & Sat 1pm–4am.** Housed in a wonderfully ornate and rambling nineteenth-century apartment block, the centre's focal point is the lively pub (with expensive Guinness). There's also the *U2* music bar in the basement (a game bar with big-screen sports TV that gets very crowded for big occasions), the rooftop *Lemon Tree* café-bar, a library and internet access. Irish breakfast served all day.

**Kaktüs** **Imam Adnan Sok 4, off İstiklal Cad ⓣ0212/249 5979. Mon–Sat 9am–2pm, Sun 11am–2am.** Favoured drinking, meeting and eating haunt of the TV and advertising crowd, and prominent (but not exclusively) gay venue. Good coffee and salads available, plus a selection of imported beers – but you pay a premium for drinking with the trendy elite.

**KV** **Tünel Gecidi 6, off İstiklal Cad ⓣ0212/251 4338, ⓦwww.kv.com.tr. Daily 8.30am–2am.** There's a distinctly Edwardian feel to this delightful café-bar: the interior's subtle lighting illuminates a clutter of antiques and bric-a-brac, quite a contrast to the clean, minimalist lines of many of the city's fashionable cafés. The beer and wine are good value, and there's a small but well-planned food menu. In summer, there are tables outside in the lovely old passageway it fronts, and you'd never know bustling İstiklal Cad was a stone's throw away.

**Leb-i-Derya** **Kumbaracı Yokuşu 115/7 ⓣ0212/293 4989. Daily 11am–4am.** A great place for an early evening (or early morning) drink, with great Bosphorus views and chilled-out sounds. There's also a decent food menu (see p.192) if you're peckish.

**Mikla** **Marmara Pera Hotel, Meşrutiyet Cad 167/185 ⓣ0212/293 5656. Daily noon–2am.** Very sophisticated terrace bar/restaurant on the roof of the *Marmara Pera*. The interior is impeccable Scandinavian and has an elegance beyond many of its competitors – not to mention superb panoramic views over the Golden Horn to Sultanahmet. Come here to sip an aperitif and watch the lights begin to twinkle over the city – but remember a small beer will set you back 10TL, a Martini double that.

**Nu Teras** **Meşrutiyet Cad 149 ⓣ0212/245 6070. June–Oct–Thurs & Sun 6.30pm–2am, Fri & Sat 6.30pm–4am.** Not quite so full of itself as *360*, this was one of the earlier roof-bars in the city and is still going strong. It's a top spot for a pre-dinner drink, watching the

sun set over the Golden Horn and the domes and minarets of the Old City beyond. Come later to unwind to chilled-out dance music into the early hours. Summer venue of the famed *Lokanta* (see p.200).

**Pano Şaraphanesi Hamalbaşı Cad 26, off İstiklal Cad, Galatasaray ⓣ0212/292 6664. Daily 11am–1pm.** Beautifully restored century-old Greek wine bar, on the opposite corner to the British Consulate. Beer, local wine and good-value – if not particularly exciting – food available (*meze* from 5TL, pasta dishes 12TL and steaks 18TL). The owners also run *Cumhuriyet Meyhane*, another historical drinking den, just round the corner in the Balık Pazarı. Packed to the rafters Thurs, Fri and Sat evenings – get here early if you want a seat.

▲ Pano Şaraphanesi

**Pasific Sofyalı Sok, off Asmalımescit.** Small, friendly bar with a good selection of rock/indie music and well-priced beer (5TL for draught Efes), with a complimetary plate of cucumber *meze*. It's a struggle to find a seat on the alleyway tables in summer, but it's great fun watching the world go by (and some nights it seems like most of it does) on this hedonistic street.

**Ritim Bar Sahane Sok 20, Balık Pazarı ⓣ0212/2490252, ⓦwww.ritimbar.com. Daily 10am–2pm.** Run by the owner of the *World House Hostel*, this down to earth multistorey bar is packed weekends (and other nights as well) with a real mixture of locals and guests from the funky hostel, attracted by the well-priced beer and eclectic mix of DJ-spun sounds on the roof terrace.

### Asian İstanbul

The places listed below are marked on the map on p.153.

**Isis Kadife Sok 26, Caferağa Mah, Kadıköy ⓣ0216/349 7381. Daily 11am–2am.** Three-storey townhouse that's a café by day and bar-club at night. Cutting-edge alternative music and good food, plus a garden shaded by chestnut and fig trees, open during the summer months. A large beer will set you back 6.5TL.

**Karga Kadife Sok 16 ⓣ0216/449 1725, Kadıköy. Daily 11am–2am.** Self-consciously cool venue on the trendiest street in Asian İstanbul, this grungy/arty place is set in a tall, narrow nineteenth-century townhouse. Inside, it's all wood and wall, with plenty of gloomy nooks for young lovers. Part pub (the lower floors) and part art gallery (top floor), it also has a large, pleasant garden out back. Beer is cheap (6TL) for a big Efes, and there's a reasonable snack-type menu.

## Clubs and live-music venues

İstanbul has become a major player in the **clubbing scene** of late – reflecting the rapid pace of modernization, the (albeit very unequal) rise in standards of living and, perhaps most importantly, the sheer number of young people around – some twelve million of the city's population are aged between 15 and 24. Most urban Turks stay up late as a matter of course, partly because they often work much later than in many other parts of Europe, and late-night clubbing suits them – so don't expect much action until well after 11pm. Unless you look the part, you might not make it past the style-police bouncers, particularly in the flashy Bosphorus-front clubs, but those up in Beyoğlu are less exclusive. Some establishments shut down for the summer (anywhere from mid-June to mid-Sept) and relocate to out-of-town venues – check listings for details.

As you might expect, **live-music venues** vary widely. Many have "house" bands that play one or more regular nights per week, with the best bands/artists (and highest entry fees – usually 25TL including a free drink, though the Bosphorus-front clubs are considerably more expensive) reserved for weekends. This is especially true of the rock-style venues, where bands play either Turkish **rock** or sing covers in English.

Although most venues offer disappointingly mainstream fare, there are the beginnings of an **underground/alternative** scene led by clubs like *Dogzstar* and *Peyote*.

In İstanbul, as in many parts of the world, **jazz** has a hardcore rather than a mass following, but the people who do like it are, by and large, affluent and influential, and this has enabled a number of clubs to flourish and attract the biggest names from the international scene. There are plenty of talented jazz musicians from İstanbul, too, including Okay Temiz and İlhan Erşahin, and whilst many go abroad to widen their audience, others are returning to rejoin a burgeoning local scene.

In summer, there are a number of festivals in and around the city (see p.43 for details). RockNCoke, Electronica, Radar Live, Efes Pilsen Blues and Efes Pilsen One Love are the best known – The International Jazz Festival and the Akbank Jazz Festival on the jazz front – though there are several others on a smaller, more alternative scale, which don't get organized until the last minute – such as the Barişa Rock (Peace Rock) festival held at the Mehmet Akif Ersoy Piknik Alanı, out in the Belgrade Forest in May.

## Beyoğlu

Unless otherwise stated, the places listed below are marked on the map on p.128.

**Babylon Şehbender Sok 3, Asmalımescit ⓣ0212/292 7368, ⓦwww.babylon-ist.com. Tues–Thurs 9.30pm–2am, Fri & Sat 10pm–3am.** Set in a modest-sized but atmospheric bare-brick vault, this is İstanbul's premier live music club (one of the "Best 100 Jazz Clubs of the World", according to US magazine *Downbeat*), with a regular programme of local and foreign groups playing jazz, world and electronica. Drinks are expensive (10TL for a small beer, 12TL for a glass of local wine) and ticket prices vary wildly according to the act (booking office across the street daily noon–6pm, or from Biletix); performances usually start around 10pm. In summer, the action moves to the Aegean coast near İzmir.

**Balans Balo Sok 22 ⓣ0212/251 7020 ⓦwww.balansmuzik.com. Mon–Thurs 10pm–2am, Fri & Sat 10pm–4am.** Sprawling venue with good, on-site micro-brewed German-style beer available in the *Balans Brau* bar. The main performance hall is impressive, seating up to 1500, but many of the shows are by mainstream Turkish pop stars. Rock lovers should head upstairs.

**Dogzstar Kartal Sok 3, off İstiklal Cad ⓣ0532/747 7494. Daily 6pm–5am.** Run by dedicated alternative-music fanatic Taylan, this place has come on leaps and bounds since it moved from its tiny former home on nearby Toşbaşağa Sok. He aims to support Turkish bands of all kinds – from psychobilly to electro-punk, and you can see the results at the regular live gigs (entry fee varies). Spread over three floors, with great views from the terrace, it's free midweek, with a 5TL cover charge at weekends. On non-gig nights, the three resident DJs spin a variety of sounds from dub, drum & bass to old-school punk – there's even room for The Fall and the Jesus and Mary Chain.

**Gizli Bahçe Nevizade Sok 27, off İstiklal Cad ⓣ0212/249 2192. Daily 9pm–4am.** The ideal place to extend your evening after the full-on *meyhane* experience of Nevizade Sok. In the Balik Pazarı, above the *Atlantik Pub* – enter through an unmarked rusty wrought-iron door and head up (if the doorman likes the look of you) to the second and third floors of an Ottoman townhouse – with sofas to lounge on, and a balcony to escape the smoke and sweat. The eclectic music – everything from jazz and blues to rock and dance – is loud but there are quiet nooks to continue conversation.

**Gossip** **Hyatt Regency Hotel, Taşkışla Sok 1 ⓣ0212/368 1234. Wed–Sat 9pm–2am. See map, p.134.** Expensive hotel club sporting avant-garde decor. The focus on Thurs and Sat is Latin. If you want to dance to salsa (with a lot of moneyed Turks who can strut their stuff – Latin dance is big amongst the city's well-to-dos), this is the place to do it. There's a relaxing garden area out back, decorated with trailing ivy and oil lamps, where the action shifts to in the summer. There's no admission, but drinks are pricey (10TL for a small beer).

**Hayal Kahvesi**, **Büyükparmakkapı Sok 19 ⓣ0212/244 2558. Daily 5pm–4am.** Attractive brick-and-wood joint with occasionally good blues and rock every night from 11pm. Fridays see ageing but deservedly popular Turkish rockers Bulutsuz Özlemi take stage. In summer, the scene moves to Çubuklu Hayal Kahvesi in Burunbahçe on the Asian side of the Bosphorus (ⓣ0216/413 6880). There's a free boat service from İstinye across the strait. Admission varies according to the act.

**Indigo** **Akarsu Sok 1/2, off İstiklal Cad ⓣ0212/244 8567, ⓦwww.livingindigo.com. Mon–Thurs & Sun 10pm–4am, Fri & Sat 11pm–5am.** The venue of choice for lovers of the latest in electronica, it's small, packed and intimate. Sees sets from both local and foreign DJs – naturally enough, the bigger names tend to play Fri and Sat. In summer, the beats skip to the resort of Bodrum.

**Jazz Café** **Hasnun Galip Sok 20, off Büyükparmakkapı Sok ⓣ0212/252 0694, ⓦwww.jazzcafeistanbul.com. Daily 4pm–2am.** Established in 1982, this was one of the first jazz venues in the city. Blues sometimes takes centre-stage here, despite the name. This is an intimate club with high tables overlooking the tiny stage. A real mix of talent from new bands to studio artists such as the famed Bulent Ortaçgil. Shows start at 10.30pm & 1pm.

**Jazz Stop** **Tel Sok 2, off Büyükparmakkapı Sok ⓣ0212/252 9314. Mon–Sat 4.30pm–4am.** Stylish, atmospheric, bare-brick and dark-wood basement club – one of İstanbul's leading venues for jazz and flamenco. Owned by the band members of the local jazz group Moğollar, who perform regularly – usually Tues. Performances start about 11pm and drinks are reasonably priced (except for the first one which is, in effect, the cover charge).

**Kemanci** **Siraselviler Cad 33/1 ⓣ0212/293 6100, ⓦwww.kemanci.org. Daily 9am–2am.** Classic, long-running rock bar, originally housed under the Galata Bridge. Happy Hour from 9am–9pm. There's a garden, regular BBQ parties and live music every weekend, and often week nights as well. Admission (for live acts) usually 20TL, otherwise free.

**Liferoof/Wongo** **Imam Adnan Sok 10, off İstiklal Cad ⓣ0212/293 6615. Sun–Thurs noon–2am, Fri & Sat noon–5am.** Concept entertainment venue (ie tries to be all things to all people) on three floors, with food, live bands playing a variety of musical styles including salsa, soul and rock, plus a lounge area to chill in. The views from the top storey are amazing.

**Line** **Büyükparmakkapı Sok 14, off İstiklal Cad ⓣ0212/252 0694. Daily 7pm–5am.** Set in a nineteenth-century apartment block, this well-established venue has live rock and pop (a mix of Western and Turkish) groups nightly. The 20TL cover charge on Fri & Sat includes one local drink. It's mainstream stuff but good fun on a packed weekend night.

**Mojo** **Büyükparmakkapı Sok 26, off İstiklal Cad ⓣ0212/243 2927, ⓦwww.mojomusic.org. Daily 10pm–4am.** Traditional basement club with live music most nights. It's very hit and miss – some of Turkey's best rock acts played here in their early days, but on an off-night expect a poor, mainstream rock-covers outfit. Entry 10TL, rising to 25TL on Sat.

**Nardis Jazz Club** **Galata Kulesi Sok 14, Galata ⓣ0212/244 6327, ⓦwww.nardisjazz.com. Mon–Thurs 8pm–1am, Fri & Sat 8pm–2am.** Run by a couple of enthusiasts, this small, intimate venue is a great introduction to the city's jazz scene, with performances by both local and international artists. The emphasis is on the mainstream, but modern, fusion and ethnic get an airing from time to time. Advance booking recommended, sets usually 9.30pm & 12.30pm weekdays, an hour later at weekends.

**Nayah** **Kurabiye Sok 23, off İstiklal Cad ⓣ0212/292 9956. Daily 6pm–4am.** Unique in the city, a small club devoted to reggae, roots, dub and ska – as well as world and rap sounds from time to time. There's live bands on the terrace – usually starting around 11.30pm – with a modest cover charge (around 10TL for home-grown bands such as Sattas). It's popular with İstanbullu and expats alike and is acquiring a solid reputation for its innovative (for İstanbul) musical policy.

**Peyote** **Kameriye Sok 4, Balık Pazarı ⓣ0212/251 4398, ⓦwww.peyote.com.tr. Daily 10pm–4am.** This is the city's best place for alternative/indie types looking for an "underground" scene. The owners are in a band themselves, and they give stage space to upcoming rivals from across the metropolis. There's a lively roof terrace with an eclectic mix of music, live bands play on the second floor, whilst the first floor is given over to electronica. Beers are a reasonable 6TL and the (variable) entry charge not too steep.

**Pixie** **Toşbaşağa Sok 12. Daily 2pm–4am.** There's no admission charge to this tiny, grungy basement club hoping to emulate the success of *Dogzstar*, which started here but has now moved to larger premises nearby (see p.209). The owner is a keen aficionado of alternative music – the entry sports a huge Factory Records poster – and the music ranges from indie to house, punk to electronica, with theme nights planned for the future. Beers are a respectable 6TL, even more so given that there's no entry charge.

**Riddim** **Siraselviler Cad 69/1 ⓣ0212/2512723. Mon–Sat 9pm–4am.** A mainstream venue offering a mix of R&B, hip-hop (in the basement) and rock to a disparate mix of locals and the odd expat. There's a mix of live acts and resident DJs, with a 25TL cover charge including one local drink on Fri and Sat. There's a terrace with diner-style tables at the rear offering cool Bosphorus views. Drinks are not cheap, with a small beer 10TL.

**Roxy** **Arslan Yatağı Sok 113, off Sıraselviler Cad ⓣ0212/245 6539, ⓦwww.roxy.com.tr. Fri & Sat 10pm–4am.** Popular club established back in 1994, it attracts a wide range of good-time punters happy to part with the steep 40TL weekend entry fee. Music ranges from dance to rock to jazz, and there are live acts – see the website for details. Closed July and Aug.

## Ortaköy

The places listed below are marked on the map on p.146.

**Crystal** **Muallim Nacı Cad 65 ⓣ0212/229 7152. Thurs–Sat midnight–5.30am.** The steep 35TL admission (Fri & Sat only) includes one free drink, but this is probably the best place for techno, house and other assorted dance sounds in the city, at least for the twenty- to thirty-something crowd who flock here – youngsters may well give the accolade to *Indigo* (opposite). The well-scuffed dance-floor says it all about the quality of foreign and local DJs who spin their stuff here. A groovy gallery, decked-out in black and chrome, surrounds the dancefloor, and there's a terrace out front with gorgeous views to the Bosphorus Bridge.

**Q Jazz at Les Ottomans** **Muallim Naci Cad 163 ⓣ0212/359 1582, ⓦwww.lesottomans.com.** If you're not intimidated (or appalled) at the thought of listening to jazz in one of the city's most expensive hotels, this could be for you. A fantastic Bosphorus-front location helps to compensate for the incongruity, and the cover price to listen to world-class jazz musicians is not too steep.

**Reina** **Muallim Nacı Cad 44 ⓣ0212/259 5919, ⓦwww.reina.com.tr. Daily 7pm–4am.** The Formula One racing car adorning the roof says it all about this club, but that hasn't stopped the likes of Sting, Uma Thurman, Kevin Costner and, appropriately, Michael Schumacher, visiting when they were in town. Summer drinking outside until dawn for the bright young things who manage to get through the door, with several dance-floors (the music is standard Euro-pop), video screens and bars all directly overlooking the Bosphorus. Entry is 50TL at weekends, there's dining at one of the themed restaurants (7–11pm), whilst cocktails will set you back a stiff 30TL. If you don't have a chauffeur-driven car to collect you in the small hours, you'll probably feel out of place.

**Sortie** **Muallim Nacı Cad 141/2 ⓣ0212/327 8585. Daily 6pm–5am. Summer only.** Just up the waterfront from the *Reina*, more restrained than its nearby rival but similar in terms of what it offers. The Fri & Sat 40TL admission includes a token drink. There are nine restaurants – French, Italian, German, Japanese and Turkish amongst others – and the music is strictly pop and house. The only attire outlawed is beach or jogging wear – go for "upsacle casual" otherwise you'll struggle. Cocktails 30TL, beers 10TL.

**Supper Club** **Muallim Nacı Cad 65 ⓣ0212/261 1988, ⓦwww.supperclub.com. Tues–Sat 6pm–2am.** In a great location, right next door to *Crystal*, this self-consciously cool venue is part of an Amsterdam-based group, with branches in Rome, San Francisco and

elsewhere. The concept is a kind of controlled hedonism, which entails listening to dance music (and watch accompanying VJ'd images on one of the nine LCD screens) from resident DJs and eating overpriced food whilst lounging on big white cushions.

### Asian İstanbul

**Shaft Osmancık Sok 13, Kadıköy ⓣ0216/349 9956, ⓦwww.shaftclub.com.tr. Daily 2pm–4am. See map, p.153.** Situated on a lively street where bars spill out onto the pedestrianized thoroughfare in summer, and much frequented by vaguely alternative/student types, this is the best club on the Asian side of the Bosphorus. Entry is a reasonable 15TL on Sat & Sun, with sets from the (mainly) rock acts starting from 10.30pm. Midweek entry is free, and there's blues and jazz as well as rock on occasion.



## Arenas and open-air venues

İstanbul is becoming an increasingly important destination on the international pop-music circuit, attracting some top acts – particularly in the summer months when outdoor shows are feasible. The three venues listed below are the most popular: the Türkcel Kuruçeşme Arena is especially good for global acts (from Kylie Minogue to REM, Shakira to Björk), whilst Harbiye plays host to big names from the indigenous pop scene. When really big bands are in town, the city's football stadiums are roped in to house them.

**Harbiye Aık Hava Tiyatrosu Darülbedayi Cad, Harbiye ⓣ0212/232 8603. See map, p.134.** Holding close to 4000 punters, this is the city's largest outdoor venue and has seen sets from home-grown favourites Duman and Sezen Aksu and is avenue for various music festivals. Completed back in 1947, this theatre is sometime listed as the Cemil Topuzlu Open Air Theatre (Cemil Topuzlu Açık Hava Tiyatrosu).

**Parkorman Büyükdere Cad, Maslak ⓣ0212/328 2000, ⓦwww.parkorman.com.** Part of a big entertainment complex out in the woods at Maslak, hosting a number of big-name international acts each year – from Chuck Berry to Massive Attack. Also hosts festivals such as Electronica.

**Türkcell Kuruçeşme Arena. Muallim Naci Cad 60, Kuruçeşme ⓣ0212/263 3963, ⓦwww.turkcellkurucesmarena.com. See map, p.168.** For bigger-name Western pop and rock acts, this Bosphorus-front open-air stadium is the city's premier venue. You couldn't ask for a more beautiful location on a balmy İstanbul evening (May–Sept only).

## Traditional Turkish music

There are many different types of Turkish music and all of them, initially at least, may sound incongruous, off-key even, to the Western ear – largely because of the copious use of quarter-tones. If you really want to scratch beneath the surface of what makes this city tick, it's worth searching out a **traditional music** venue. Essentially there are two kinds: the *Türkü* bar and the *meyhane*. In the **Türkü bar**, the focus is on the *bağlama*, a kind of long-necked lute played with amazing dexterity by experts. On a typical evening, expect to sit around, beer in hand, listening to the (initially at least) plaintive sounds of the *bağlama*. As the evening progresses, however, the *bağlama* player, perhaps accompanied by fellow musicians playing the *deblek* (a kind of bongo-drum) and a *ney* (a kind of flute) raises the tempo and the audience gets to their feet, links fingers and dances the *halay*, the country's national dance. It's great fun and very popular amongst young İstanbullu – the latest global club sounds and traditional Anatolian folk music are not mutually exclusive in this city of paradoxes. *Fasil* is quite different and played mainly by *Roma* (gypsy) bands. Visit virtually any

**meyhane** (such as those on Nevizade Sokak or in Kumkapı) and you won't be able to escape it even if you wanted to, as the musicians serenade each and every table in search of tips.

## Beyoğlu

The places below are marked on the map on p.128.

**Andon** **Sıraselviler Cad 89 ⓣ0212/251 0222, ⓦwww.andon.com.tr.** Massively popular with İstanbul's fashionable set, with five overwhelming floors, each with their own personality: there's Western-style pop on the first floor, dancing in the *Pera* bar to İstanbul's best DJs; local and imported wines and cheese in the second-floor *Wine House*; live Turkish music and belly-dancing in *Müdavim Bar* on the third; a good introduction to *fasil* music and *rakı* at the fourth-floor *meyhane*, with a 101 types of *meze*; and stunning views from the fifth-floor roof-terrace restaurant. A fixed-price menu of 60TL includes unlimited local alcoholic drinks; booking advised. On Fri and Sat, the 20TL admission charge includes one drink.

**Bedaliza** **Imam Adnan Sok 22, off İstiklal Cad ⓣ0212/244 1845. Daily 11am–5pm.** A fixed menu here will set you back a little under 60TL, but the real attraction is the music, some of the best *Türkü* around and consistently highly rated by the local press.

**Ehli Keyif** **Kallavi Sok 8, off İstiklal Cad ⓣ0212/251 1010. Mon–Sat noon–2am.** A *fasil* music venue, absolutely jam-packed weekends (reservations essential) and very lively, with thirty-somethings and a generally older crowd letting their hair down and dancing in the aisles. The fixed-menu includes eight *meze*, a fish or meat main and seasonal fruit to follow.

**Kallavi Taverna** **Kurabiye Sok 16, off İstiklal Cad ⓣ0212/245 1213, ⓦwww.kallavi20.net.** Small, traditional restaurant, recently moved to this location. Fixed menu (60TL) includes ten starters, four entrées, a main and fruit, plus unlimited local drinks. With live *fasil* music every night, it's very popular with the locals. There's another branch at Şefik Bey Sok in Kadıköy. Closed Sun.

**Mektup** **Imam Adnan Sok 26, off İstiklal Cad ⓣ0212/251 0740. Daily noon–4pm.** There's no fixed menu on offer here but prices are reasonable and the *Türkü* of a high standard – it has seen sets by notable artists such as Ebru Destan and Tuğbay Özay. This was voted the best *Türkü* bar in the country by the *Hüriyet* newspaper, so booking is advisable – especially at weekends.

**Munzur** **Hasnün Galip Sok 9, off İstiklal Cad ⓣ0212.245 4669. Daily 6pm–4am.** The Munzur mountains, away to the east in the heartland of Turkey's Kurdish Alevi population (the Alevi has spawned the nation's best *bağlama* players), are the inspiration for this no-frills but lively *Türkü* bar. The food is OK, the drinks not too pricey, and when things get going there's plenty of linked bodies dancing around the tables.

**Süheyla** **Kalyoncu Kulluğu Sok 45, off Nevizade Sok ⓣ0212/251 8347. Daily 8pm–2am.** Friendly late-night *lokanta* behind the Balik Pazarı. The house band members are a talented lot and have been knocking out both *fasil* and *Türkü* classics for the last fifteen years – the sets usually begin around 9.30pm. The fixed menu is reasonable 70TL, including local drinks, and much merriment is assured when things get into full swing. Booking advised weekends.

## The Grand Bazaar and around

**Kör Agop** **Ördekli Bakkal 7–9, Kumkapı ⓣ0212/517 2334. Daily Noon–2am. See map, p.90.** This down-to-earth *meyhane* has a good reputation for the quality of the *fasil* bands that pay court to its diners (see p.198) – especially on Fri and Sat nights.

## North of Taksim

**Despina** **Açıkyol Sok 9 ⓣ0212/232 6720. Daily noon–midnight.** Out in the wilderness of the business district of Şişli, the sub-district of Kurtuluş was once home to a wealthy Armenian and Greek community. Their ghosts hang on in this long-established venue, famous for the accomplishment of its *fasil* band. People come out of their way (they have to, it's a long way from most places) to enjoy the Armenian-style *meyhane* food on offer – and the great music. On Fri and Sat, you're bound to be drawn into the singing and dancing.

## Cabaret

**Cabaret** is probably the most expensive and least authentic way to develop a feel for the Orient. Even in the more reputable places, an exorbitant entrance fee is levied, you are overcharged for anything you eat or drink, and belly-dancers expect to be given generous amounts of money (stuffed in their bras) by foreign tourists. Avoid the touts, particularly around the *Hilton* and other five-star hotels on Cumhuriyet Caddesi, who may lead you to less-salubrious places and stick to the more established venues, the best of which are reviewed below. Unless otherwise stated, the cabaret venues have daily **performances**, with dinner served at 7.45pm, the show running from 8.30pm to around midnight.

**Kervansaray** **Cumhuriyet Cad 30, Harbiye ⓣ0212/247 1630, ⓦwww.kervansaray.com.tr; see map, p.134.** Not far from the *Hilton*, it's a huge, pillared, chandeliered hall where you won't feel comfortable unless you dress up a bit. It's expensive at 105TL a head including food and two complimentary drinks (80TL without food), but the club has a good reputation for its floor show, which includes Oriental and folk dancers.

**Orient House** **President Hotel, Tiyatro Cad 27, Beyazit ⓣ0212/517 6163, ⓦwww.orienthouseistanbul.com; see map, p.90.** Traditional Turkish and folk music, plus belly-dancing. A four-course meal with wine and show is 120TL a head (without food 80TL).

**Sultana's** **Cumhuriyet Cad 16, Harbiye ⓣ0212/219 3904, ⓦwww.sultanas-nights.com; see map, p.134.** Oriental and folklore show, costing 120TL with dinner, 70TL with no food but a complimentary drink, nuts and fruit, plus free transport from any hotel (cheaper rates can be negotiated if you just turn up at the door). Members of the audience are expected to participate in the *Harem* dance.

**Turkish Cultural Dance Theatre** **Fırat Culture Centre, Divan Yolu, Sultanahmet ⓣ0212/517 8692, ⓦwww.dancesofcolours.com.** Presents *Dances of Colours* from ten different regions of Turkey, including belly-dancing and Whirling Dervishes, in an a/c auditorium next to the Çemberlitas tram stop. This is purely theatre, with no dinner or the other trappings of a club. Twice-weekly shows (30TL) on Tues at 5.15pm and Fri at 7pm.

13

# The arts

Despite the protestations of Turkey's political capital, Ankara, İstanbul is the cultural hub of the country, hosting a decent variety of annual cultural **festivals** and generally matching other European cities for the breadth of its **arts scene** – the city has been chosen, deservedly, as a **European Capital of Culture** for 2010, and with national pride at stake there's likely to be a massive injection of cash into the arts.

The recently reopened and lovingly restored Süreyya Opera House in Kadıköy is a great place to see quality **opera** and **classical music** concerts, which, along with **ballet**, form an important part of the city's cultural life here. Theatre is popular, though most plays performed on the thirty or so stages in the city are in Turkish. The State Theatre Company puts on occasional plays in English, and foreign theatre groups such as the Royal Shakespeare Company perform during May's International İstanbul Theatre Festival. The main **annual event** is the International Music Festival during June and July, which includes jazz, classical and world music concerts, as well as performances by the İstanbul State Symphony Orchestra. Information on all music and theatre events, and on the various cultural festivals, is available from the İstanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts, İstiklal Cad 146, Beyoğlu (Ⓣ0212/334 0700, Ⓦwww.iksv.org).

**İstanbul Modern**, opened in 2005, has helped pave the way for a revival of the visual arts in the city, aided and abetted by the now well-established İstanbul International Biennial. The city is swamped with cinemas, most showing Hollywood films in English with subtitles, but the output of the fast-growing domestic **film industry** is screened in Turkish, apart from during one of the film festivals.

## Classical music, opera and ballet

As part of his great push to westernize the fledgling Turkish Republic and break from the Ottoman past, Atatürk tried to inculcate new values amongst the population, amongst them a love for Western classical music and opera. He was partially successful, and today most educated, middle- and upper-class Turks have at least a passing interest in **classical music**, **opera** and **ballet**. The İstanbul State Symphony Orchestra and İstanbul State Opera and Ballet Company are funded by the government, but there are several privately funded orchestras, including the renowned Borusan Philharmonic. The season runs from November to May, but in summer venues such as the former Byzantine church of Aya İrene and the underground cistern, Yerbatan Sarnıçı, provide prestigious venues for the international **İstanbul Music Festival** (see p.144).

**Tickets** for most events and performances (generally between 10–40TL), can be purchased online from Biletix (ⓦwww.biletix.com), whose website is in both Turkish and English. There are also many Biletix outlets around the city, the most useful of which is the **Ada book and music store** on İstiklal Caddesi. Otherwise, you can buy tickets from the relevant venue, either online or from their box office. For what's on, check *TimeOut İstanbul*.



**Akbank Culture and Arts Centre (Akbanksanat) İstiklal Cad 14–18, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/252 3500, ⓦwww.akbanksanat.com.** Classical music concerts are a staple here as this Akbank-funded venue has an in-house orchestra, but there's plenty of other action including plays and regular exhibitions. Also home to the Akbank Chamber Orchestra.

**Atatürk Cultural Centre (AKM) Taksim Square; Theatre ⓣ0212/251 5600; Opera & Ballet ⓣ0212/243 2011; Symphony Orchestra ⓣ0212/243 1068; ⓦwww.idobale.com.** Reprieved from demolition, and closed at the time of writing as it undergoes a 40,000,000TL facelift, the AKM is a multi-purpose venue shared by the state symphony orchestra, theatre and opera and ballet companies. A leading venue during the various international festivals and has regular performances of classical music on Fri evenings and Sat mornings, plus opera and ballet on Thurs and Fri nights throughout the year.

**Aya Irene Topkapı Palace, Sultanhmet.** Atmospheric venue in the cavernous interior of the Byzantine Church of the Divine Peace staging classical music concerts at irregular intervals, generally in summer. The seating may be reminiscent of a school assembly and the acoustics are only moderate, but this is a special place.

**Borusan Arts and Cultural Centre İstiklal Cad 421, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/292 0655, ⓦwww.borusansanat.com.** Home to the Borusan Philharmonic Orchestra, one of Turkey's most successful private orchestras, the complex also boasts one of the country's most extensive CD libraries and a decent art gallery.

**Caddebostan Culture Centre Haldun Taner Sok 11, off Bağdat Cad, Kadıköy ⓣ0216/360 9095.** This is the largest arts complex on the Asian side, with a 650-seater auditorium as well as a smaller hall, cinemas, galleries and a bookshop. Some of the leading lights of the Turkish classical music scene play here.

**Cemil Reşit Rey (CRR) Darülbedai Cad 1, Harbiye ⓣ0212/231 5497, ⓦwww.crrks.org.** Chamber, classical, jazz and Turkish music, plus regular performances by visiting international orchestras. Venue for the International Music Festival (June) and the CRR Piano Festival (Dec). Daily performances in season (Oct–May). It also has its own well-regarded symphony orchestra.

**İş Arts Centre İş Sanat Kültür Merkezi, İş Kuleleri, Kule 17, Levent ⓣ0212/316 1083. Metro Levent.** Out in the business district of Levent, this multi-purpose venue, with an 800-capacity main auditorium, is housed in a tower block. Classical music performances, jazz and world-music concerts are held, plus plays – and there's an art gallery attached.

**Lütfi Kırdar Congress and Exhibition Centre Darülbedayi Cad 60, Harbiye ⓣ0212/296 3055, ⓦwww.icec.org.** With an auditorium seating some 3500, this is one of the city's premier spots for classical music and ballet – and for the best in traditional Turkish music. It also holds major art exhibitions, including the İstanbul Contemporary Arts Fair. Undergoing a major facelift at the time of writing.

**Süreyya Opera Bahariye Cad 29, Kadıköy ⓣ0216/346 1531, ⓦwww.sureyyaoperasi.org.** Set in a gorgeous, beautifully restored opera house built in 1924, this is a delightfully intimate place to watch opera, ballet and classical music and a rare oasis of culture on the Asian side of the Bosphorus. The season runs from Oct through to May. Tickets online from ⓦwww.dobgm.gov.tr.

**Türker İnanoğlu Maslak Show Centre Büyükdere Cad, Derbent Mevki, Maslak ⓣ0212/286 6686, ⓦwww.timshowcenter.com. Bus #25/T (Taksim–Sariyer).** Located out in distant Maslak, this is a populist venue, with everything from gypsy orchestras and Chinese acrobatic teams to ballet and Broadway shows. It's big, it's brash, it's a long way from the Old City both in distance (15km from Taksim) and atmosphere – but it's certainly a part of İstanbul as it is today.

## Theatre and performing arts

İstanbul has a thriving **theatre** scene, with venues in districts as diverse as ultra-orthodox Fatih and upmarket Harbiye, but unfortunately productions are almost always in Turkish. The best opportunity to see performances in English is during the **International İstanbul Theatre Festival** (see p.44), when many foreign companies hit town; ultra-cool Garajistanbul draws in international as well as home-grown artists, whilst the Kenter and Tiyatro Pera theatres stage occasional performances in English.

**Garajistanbul** **Kaymakan Reşit Bey Sok 11, off Yeniciler Cad, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/244 4499, ⓦwww.garajistanbul.com.** Trendy, stripped-down performing arts venue in a former underground car park just off Galatasaray Meydanı, reached from Kaymakan Sok. This is as cutting edge as it gets in İstanbul, with workshops, films and art projects associated with modern dance, theatre and other performances. Its own company performs at the venue and tours abroad, and attracts quality performing artists from around the world. With seating limited to 250, it's worth booking for most things. Closed July & Aug.

**Kenter Theatre** **Halaskargazi Cad 35, Harbiye ⓣ0212/246 3589, ⓦwww.kentoyunculari.com.** Theatre founded by the famous Turkish actress Yıldız Kenter, who appears in most of the plays. Some English-speaking performances, such as Shakespeare and Chekhov. Also the venue for the Turkish Shadow Play, performed on most weekend mornings and at the Puppet Festival in May.

**Ses 1185 Ortaoyuncular** **İstiklal Cad 90, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/251 186, ⓦwww.ortaoyuncular.com.** Set up in 1980 by multi-talented Ferhan Sensoy, who was educated at nearby Galatasaray Lycée but received much of his artistic training abroad, the Ses 1185 put on an eclectic mix of plays in this beautiful old theatre.

**Tiyatro Pera** **Siraselviler Cad 70, Taksim ⓣ0212/245 4460, ⓦwww.tiyatropera.com.** Professional company started in 2001 by the ambitious actress/director Nesrin Kazankaya, it stages a mix of Western (from Aristophanes and Shakespeare to Brecht) and Turkish productions, with some shows in English – usually Thurs–Sun, with performances starting at 8pm.

## Galleries and exhibition spaces

The visual arts scene is booming in İstanbul. Centred, though by no means confined to, Beyoğlu and its environs, is a range of **contemporary art** shows that would have been unimaginable back in the 1980s. Things began to change with the inaugural **International İstanbul Biennial** (see box, p.219), first held in 1987, which gave a platform to both foreign and local artists. Corporate sponsors, particularly banks, have filled the void left by the absence of state funding and opened up a number of multi-purpose **exhibition venues** – mainly on İstiklal Caddesi. But the revival has spread beyond Beyoğlu. In 2004, the **İstanbul Modern** opened to great fanfare on a stunning Bosphorus front location. Then came the **Pera Museum** in Beyoğlu, followed by the equally go-ahead **Sakip Sabancı Museum**, out in a posh Bosphorus suburb, which has showcased Picasso, Rodin and Dalí. **Santralistanbul**, in the grounds of Bilgi University at the head of the Golden Horn, opened in 2006 and is even more cutting edge than İstanbul Modern. Plenty of contemporary Turkish art is featured in these spaces, too, and in the bank-sponsored and commercial **galleries** listed below.

**Aksanat Culture and Arts Centre (Akbank-sanat)** **İstiklal Cad 16–18, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/252 3500, ⓦwww.akbanksanat.com. Tues–Thurs 10.30am–7pm.** Changing exhibitions of art and sculpture from a mix of well-known local artists, Turkish students and internationally acclaimed artists – plus an interesting selection of films of jazz and

classical music concerts shown on a giant screen.

**Borusan Arts & Cultural Centre** **İstiklal Cad 421, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/292 0655, ⓦwww.borusansanat.com. Tues–Sat 10.30am–7pm.** State-of-the-art exhibition space showing established Turkish artists as well as international names. Also home to the Borusan Philharmonic Orchestra.

**Galeri Nev** **Maçka Cad 33, Maçka ⓣ0212/231 6763, ⓦwww.galerinev.com. Mon–Sat 11am–6.30pm.** Small exhibition space in this prosperous suburb, featuring both Turkish and international artists.

**Galerist** **İstiklal Cad 311/4, Mısır Apt ⓣ0212/244 8230, ⓦwww.galerist.com.tr. Mon–Sat 10am–6pm.** Commercial gallery of considerable repute, showcasing some of the very best contemporary Turkish artists.

**İstanbul Modern** **Meclis-I Mebusan Cad, Liman İşletmeleri Sahası Antropo 4, Karaköy ⓣ0212/334 7300, ⓦwww.istanbulmodern.org. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm, Thurs until 8pm.** İstanbul's answer to the Tate Modern in London, with regularly changing exhibits by contemporary Turkish and foreign artists, plus a cinema showing art-house movies, workshops (including ones for kids) and a chic café-restaurant. See p.141 for more information.

▲ İstanbul Modern

**Ottoman Bank Museum** **Voyvoda Cad 35/7, Karaköy ⓣ0212/245 5095, ⓦwww.obmuze.com. Daily 10am–6pm. 3TL.** Small but well-thought-out exhibition space in a grand nineteenth-century building, with an eclectic mix of themed exhibitions and an attached cinema. See p.136 for more information.

**Pera Museum** **Meşrutiyet Cad 141, Tepebaşı ⓣ0212/334 9900. Tues–Sat 10am–7pm, Sun noon–6pm.** Top three floors of a grand, wonderfully restored, nineteenth-century building exhibiting regularly changing works by contemporary artists, including a major Miró retrospective in 2008. See p.131 for more information.

**Photography Centre** **Tarlabaşı Bulvarı 272, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/338 1160, ⓦwww.istanbulfotografmerkezi.com. Mon–Sat 11am–7pm.** Commercial gallery housing works by some of Turkey's best photographers, including Ara Güler (see p.132), and changing exhibitions with works by leading international names in the Leica Gallery. Also offers photography courses at all levels.

**Platform Garanti Contemporary Arts Centre** **İstiklal Cad 276 ⓣ0212/233 2238, ⓦwww.platform.garanti.com.tr. Tues–Thurs 1–8pm, Fri & Sat 1–10pm.** Changing arts and photography exhibitions in a 1960s building, affording space to some of the big names in contemporary art. There are both local and international artists in residence and regular lectures.

**Sakıp Sabancı Museum** **İstenye Cad 22, Emirgan ⓣ0212/277 2200, ⓦwww.muze.sabanciuniv.edu. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm, Wed & Sat until 10pm. Entry 10TL.** Housed in a 1920s villa known as the Atlı Köşk, and owned by one of Turkey's wealthiest families, the Sabancıs, this welcome addition to the İstanbul arts scene held a major Picasso exhibition in 2006 – the first of its kind in Turkey – followed up in 2008 by a Dalí retrospective. See p.165 for more information.

**Santralistanbul** **Kazım Karabekir Cad 1, off Sütlüce Cad 22 ⓣ0212/3117000, ⓦwww.santralistanbul.org. Tues–Sun 10am–10pm. Free shuttle bus from AKM, Taksim or Eyüp ferry.** Set in the grounds of Bilgi University, in space contrived from the outbuildings of a defunct early twentieth-century power station and next door to the Museum of Energy, Santralistanbul takes on from where the pioneering İstanbul Modern left off. Features local and international artists, with an emphasis on video installations.

**Siemans Sanat** **Meclis Mebusan Cad 125, Fındıklı ⓣ0212/334 1104, ⓦwww.siemans.com.tr/seimansart. Tram Kabataş. Daily**

## Istanbul International Biennial

Organized by IKSV, the İstanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts, the **İstanbul International Biennial** is a major showcase of contemporary art. From relatively humble beginnings back in 1987, it has grown incrementally and now rivals Venice, Sâo Paulo and Sydney in the biennial stakes. Turner Prize-winners Gillian Wearing and Gavin Turk have exhibited here, amongst a welter of internationally acclaimed artists. The biennials (held on odd-numbered years) are themed and use different venues across the city, from historic buildings such as the Topkapı Palace to urban-chic industrial warehouses. The 2009 Biennial, the eleventh, runs from September 12 to November 8 and will show over one hundred different video works on streets across the city. For more information, check out ⓦwww.iksv.org.

**10am–7pm. Free.** Founded in 2003, it features regularly changing themed exhibitions showcasing predominantly young artists from both Turkey and abroad, with everything from old-school drawings to video installations. Conveniently located near the İstanbul Modern.

**Yapı Kredi Cultural Centre İstiklal Cad 285, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/334 1333, ⓦwww.ykykultur.com.tr. Mon–Fri 10am–7pm, Sat 10am–6pm, Sun 1–6pm.** A real mixed bag of exhibitions at this prominent gallery on İstiklal Cad, from photography to sculpture, modern art to ethnographia.



# Film

After years of precipitous decline, the Turkish **film industry** is booming, with internationally acclaimed directors **Nuri Bilge Ceylan**, **Fatih Akın** and **Ferzan Özpetek** leading the way (see p.338), and an increasing amount of screen time being taken up by home-grown films – until quite recently, Hollywood releases, with Turkish subtitles, predominated İstanbul's cinemas. The problem, paradoxically, with trying to watch a Turkish film in İstanbul is that unless you catch it at one of the film Festivals (see p.44) it will be in Turkish with no subtitles. If you're thinking of taking your kids to a film while you're here (tempting given the paucity of kid-orientated stuff in the city), bear in mind that many of the imported films aimed at youngsters are dubbed into Turkish.

Many of the modern multi-screen **cinemas** are situated in large shopping malls, with the best old-style screens in Beyoğlu, once the centre of domestic film production. Most retain a fifteen-minute coffee and cigarette interval. Tickets cost from 10TL, depending on the cinema, though most offer mid-week Halk Günü or People's Day discount nights. The annual International Film Festival (mid-April to May) takes place mainly at cinemas in Beyoğlu, the smaller **Filekimi**, running for one week in October, utilizes the retro-chic Emek cinema, also in Beyoğlu.

**AFM Akmerkez Akmerkez Shopping Mall, Etiler ⓣ0212/282 0505. Levent Metro.** A large multiplex, surrounded by a vast food court and Akmerkez's palatial shops. Sound and screen quality amongst the best in town, but really only of interest if you've been shopping in the mall.

**AFM Fitaş İstiklal Cad 24–26, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/292 1111, ⓦwww.afm.com.tr.** A popular ten-screen cinema not far from Taksim Square, showing the newest films, with a cool pub upstairs. The smartest of the cinemas in Beyoğlu, but not the most atmospheric.

**Alkazar İstiklal Cad 179, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/293 2466.** Three screens on three floors, this former music hall rivals the Emek as the most interesting place to watch a film in the city. Shows a mix of standard Hollywood fare and some art-house films if you're lucky.

▲ Film poster

**Atlas İstiklal Cad 209, Atlas Pasajı ⓣ0212/252 8576.** Three-screen joint set above the alternative-type shops of this historic arcade, it shows the usual programme of Hollywood and home-grown products – with the occasional more arty movie from time to time.

**City Life City's Mall, Teşvikiy Cad 162, Nişantaşı ⓣ0212/373 3535, ⓦwww.citylifecinema.com.** Seven-screen, state-of-the-art cinema housed in the retro-style City's Mall shopping centre in upmarket Nişantaşı, with trendy (and expensive) café-bars attached.

**Emek Yeşilçam Sok 5, off İstiklal Cad, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/293 8439.** This huge, characterful auditorium (875 seats), built in the 1920s, remains a popular venue. Redolent of the glory days of old Pera, the ceiling is a mass of ornate mouldings, there's a sweeping balcony and a glittering gold screen-curtain. Best of the Beyoğlu cinemas, despite the ragged edges.

**Enka Açık Have Tiyatrosu Sadi Gülçelik Spor Sitesi, İstinye ⓣ0212/276 2214, ⓦwww .enksanat.org. Metro Levent, then dolmuş to İstiniye.** Greek theatre-style venue in the Bosphorus suburb of İstniye, showing different films every night from the start of Aug through to mid-Sept. Chilled-out place for a different experience.

**Feriye Çirağan Cad 124, Ortaköy ⓣ1212/236 2864, ⓦwww.umutsanat.com.tr.** Three-screen cinema with a well-regarded attached café and seats either in the auditorium or (for a supplement) balcony. Handy if you're looking to kill some time before heading out to the bars and clubs in Ortaköy, but most releases are mainstream despite it being situated in a cultural complex.

**İstanbul Modern Meclis-I Mebusan Cad, Liman İşletmeleri Sahası Antropo 4, Karaköy ⓣ0212/334 7300, ⓦwww.istanbulmodern.org.** The best place for art-house, alternative and documentary films in the city, located on the lower floor of the Modern gallery. Programme changes monthly.

**Kanyon, Mars Kanyon Mall, Büydere Cad 185, Levent ⓣ0212/353 0814, ⓦwww.marssinema .com. Metro Levent.** Unsurprisingly given its location in this ultramodern shopping mall, the ticket prices are above average, but probably worth it if you want the comfiest seats and best picture and sound quality in town – with the possible exception of the City Life in Nişantaşı.

**Şafak Yeniçeriler Cad, Çemberlitaş ⓣ0212/516 2660, ⓦwww.ozenfilm.com.tr.** The closest cinema to Sultanahmet, buried in the bowels of a shopping centre, with seven screens showing the latest Western and Turkish releases.

**Yeşilçam İmam Adnan Sok 10 ⓣ0212/249 8006, ⓦwww.yesilcamsinemasi.com.** This retro, bohemian, single-screen basement cinema is the best place to see Turkish and foreign art-house movies, and is the cheapest in the area, too. The walls of the gloomy café/foyer are papered with old cinema posters, and there's an antique projector on display. Unfortunately, they don't run the film if only a few people turn up – which happens quite regularly.

14

# Gay and lesbian İstanbul

İstanbul is the **gay capital** of Turkey, with the scene firmly centred in and around Taksim, where most of the places reviewed in this section can be found. Although transvestite and transsexual singers and entertainers have been held in high esteem in Turkey since Ottoman times (see p.319), homosexuality remains socially taboo, though consensual acts between 18-year-olds and over is legal. "Disseminating homosexual information" (ie advocating the lifestyle), however, is against the law. Lambada, Turkey's foremost gay-liberation group, accused of acting against the "moral standards of the nation", was closed (in the spring of 2008) on procedural grounds, despite the court failing to make the initial charge stick – a clear sign of Turkey's ambiguous attitude to its gay minority.

The country as a whole, even the cultural capital of İstanbul, remains very **conservative**. Affection between males is part and parcel of society – straight males linking arms in public or resting their hand on a friend's thigh whilst chatting are common sights – but as a result of a tight-knit family life and the ensuing social pressure, Turkish gays usually feel obliged to keep their sexual orientation well under wraps. It's only in the moderately hedonistic atmosphere of the clubs of liberal Taksim that they feel free to express themselves – perhaps

## Bülent Ersoy: the nation's favourite diva

The rounded, smiling and heavily made-up face of **Bülent Ersoy** is a common sight on Turkey's TV screens and in the country's gossip magazines. Born in 1952, Ersoy became a popular singer before undergoing a sex change in 1981 – though she kept her male first name. Seen by the authorities, if not many of the general public, as a social deviant in a hard-line state still reeling from the effects of the 1980 military coup, she was banned from performing in public. After a period of exile in Germany, Ersoy returned to Turkey following a change in the law that allowed her to become a "legal" female. She went on to become even more popular than before, her public apparently adoring her flamboyant behaviour and outrageous dress-sense as well as her singing and acting abilities. Despite the scandal caused when she married a man some twenty years her junior, Ersoy went on to co-host one of the nation's most popular TV shows, **Popstar Alaturca**. In 2008, she found herself in trouble again, when she publically declared that were she a mother she would not send her son to fight in Iraq, where the Turkish military were conducting operations against the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) – daring words in a country where it's forbidden to call into question conscription.

not surprisingly, as it's still technically possible to be arrested for cruising. Having said this, you'd be very unlucky to run into problems with the authorities, or be "gay-bashed", even though the word "*ibne*" (passive partner in a homosexual relationship) is a deadly insult here.

## Websites and media

Lambada's website **www.lambadaistanbul.org**, blocked by the authorities at the time of writing, may come back online – in its absence, one of the best introductions to the İstanbul gay scene is the glossy **www.istanbulgay.com**, which gives a run-down of the best gay bars and clubs (including guided cruises of the best venues) and gay-friendly hotels, reviews the sauna cruising scene and has a section on lesbian İstanbul. Another good site in English is **www.absolutesultans.com**, which gives a sound introduction to the realities of gay life in the city. The site is run commercially – gay tourism is their business – but even if you're not interested in their services, they do have some good tips. Alternatively, the weekly **Time Out İstanbul** reviews gay and lesbian venues and has regular features on the city's gay scene.

**Ajda** **Lamartin Cad 40, Taksim 0212/254 4526, www.ajdaclub.com. Tues–Sun 10pm–4am. See map, p.134.** Long-established (originally as *Neo*) bar popular with upmarket professionals, quite yuppyish but one of İstanbul's consistently crowded gay venues – even Kate Moss is rumoured to have visited.

**Bar Bahçe** **Soğancı Sok 7, off Sıraselviler Cad, Beyoğlu 0212/245 1718. Daily 10pm–4am. See map, p.128.** In the same building as *5. Kat* but on the first floor, this place has an excellent reputation amongst İstanbul's gay sophisticates. It's modestly sized, but there's a decent dancefloor, a couple of bars, good house music and regular parties and other events – with a mixed crowd of mainly affluent punters.

**Barışık Club** **İstiklal Cad 114, Beyoğlu 0212/682 2306, www.barisikclub.com. Mon–Thurs & Sun 11pm–4am Fri & Sat 11pm–7am. See map, p.128.** Run by a former manager of *Tek Yön* and set on the second floor of an apartment building near Galatasaray Meydan in the centre of İstiklal Cad. It's designed for older men and the bear contingent, with male belly-dancers, drag shows and other entertainment on offer and a standard mix of Turkish and Euro-pop music on the sound system.

**Bigudi** **Büyükbayram Sok 1, off Atıf Yılmaz Sok, Beyoğlu. Daily 11pm–4am. See map, p.128.** The only dedicated lesbian venue in town – and that goes for all the staff (including security), as well as the punters.

**Club 14** **Abdulhakhamit Cad, Belediye Dükkanları 14, Taksim 0212/256 2121. Tues–Sun 11pm–4am. See map, p.134.** Tiny late-night spot with a young crowd, lively atmosphere, good music and friendly staff.

**Love Dance Point** **Cumhuriyet Cad 349, Harbiye 0212/296 3357, www.lovedancepoint.com. Wed 11.30pm–4am, Fri & Sat 11.30pm–5am. See map, p.134.** Glitzy, hi-tech and spacious club opposite the Military Museum with free admission Wed, 25TL cover Fri & Sat including one drink. DJs spin a wide range of sounds, from techno to Turkish pop. A proper club rather than a glorified café/bar, it also holds regular parties.

**Otherside** **Lamartin Cad 11/4, Taksim 0212/235 7914. Daily 10pm–2am. See map, p.134.** Well-established and laidback place, frequented by affluent locals and foreigners alike, with small dancefloor and an intimate, friendly atmosphere.

**Prive** **Tarlabasi Bul 28, Taksim 0212/235 7999. Daily 11pm–5am.** Gay-only dance club, with a devoted following due to its reputation as a pick-up place. The mix of electro and Turkish music will appeal to most punters. Really gets going after 1am. Entry Fri & Sat only (20TL including a drink). This street has a bad reputation in the city – and not just amongst straights – so take care if you decide to venture out here.

**Sahra Bar** **Sadri Alaşık Sok 40, off İstiklal Cad, Beyoğlu 0212/244 3306. Daily 11am–2am. See map, p.128.** For the super-confident

only, this three-storey place caters to transexuals, transvestites, queens and gays – with more than its fair share of hetro-sexual adventurers and rent boys.

**Sugar Café** **Sakalsalim Çıkmazı 7, off İstiklal Cad, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/245 0096. Daily 11am–1am. See map, p.128.** Low-key meeting and hang-out joint off the busy main drag, somewhere to decide what you're going to do later on.

**Tek Yön** **Ekrem Türk Sok 14, off Balo Sok, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/245 1653, ⓦwww.tekyonclub.com. Daily 11.30pm–4am. See map, p.128.** Moved to its present location in 2007 and very popular, possibly because it's so mainstream. Friendly staff who perform occasional drag shows.

# 15

# Shopping

**Shopping** in İstanbul is an experience. Whether trawling through an Ottoman-era bazaar for carpets or kilims, sizing-up retro T-shirts in a tiny alternative-clothing store in Galata, or mixing it with the middle classes in one of the city's ultramodern shopping malls, there are more than enough opportunities to keep even the most addicted shopaholic busy. Only someone with superhuman willpower could come to this city and not visit the **Grand Bazaar**. Known in Turkish as the Kapalı Çarşı, this hive of over four thousand little shops has, for centuries, been performing the same function as modern malls – putting a host of different traders selling a welter of different goods under the same roof. You'll get lost, hustled and quite likely end up buying something you didn't know you wanted, but it's an unmissable experience. Far more manageable – and the place to head for spices and sweets, including the ubiquitous *lokum* (Turkish Delight) – is the **Mısır Çarşısı**, or Spice Bazaar, on the crowded Golden Horn waterfront in Eminönü. In addition, there are over 350 **street markets** across the city, held on a few streets in a given district once a week. Most sell everything from fruit and vegetables to cheap household utensils and fake designer clothing, with the best being the Çarşamba Pazarı, held in the conservative Fatih district every Wednesday.

**İstiklal Caddesi** in Beyoğlu is İstanbul's main shopping thoroughfare, and is traffic-free save for an antique tram. Many major Turkish and international chains can be found along here, as well as the city's best bookshops. Off this buzzing street are a number of arcades or **pasaj**, some of them dating back to the nineteenth century, selling a mix of alternative and bargain secondhand clothing, funky jewellery, retro cinema posters and quirky household items. Scattered around the city are a number of other shopping districts, which may be of interest depending on your tastes. Upmarket **Nişantaşı** and **Teşvikiye** are the places to head for international and Turkish designer fashion and accessories, with Cartier, Armani, Gucci et al displaying their wares in appropriately expensive shops – particularly on Abdi İpekçi and in the City's Mall. The pedestrian streets behind the ferry terminal in **Kadıköy**, across the Bosphorus, have a mix of small, interesting outlets, whilst **Bağdat Caddesi** is known for its flashier wares.

Love them or hate them, **malls** are as much a part of life here as anywhere else in the developed world – at least for the middle classes and up. If you're pining for M&S, Benetton or Harvey Nics, a trip out to a mall will satisfy your urges and allow you to see a slice of İstanbul beyond the stereotypical domes and minarets of the Old City. Of course, the big advantage of mall shopping is that prices are all marked up so you don't have to bargain.

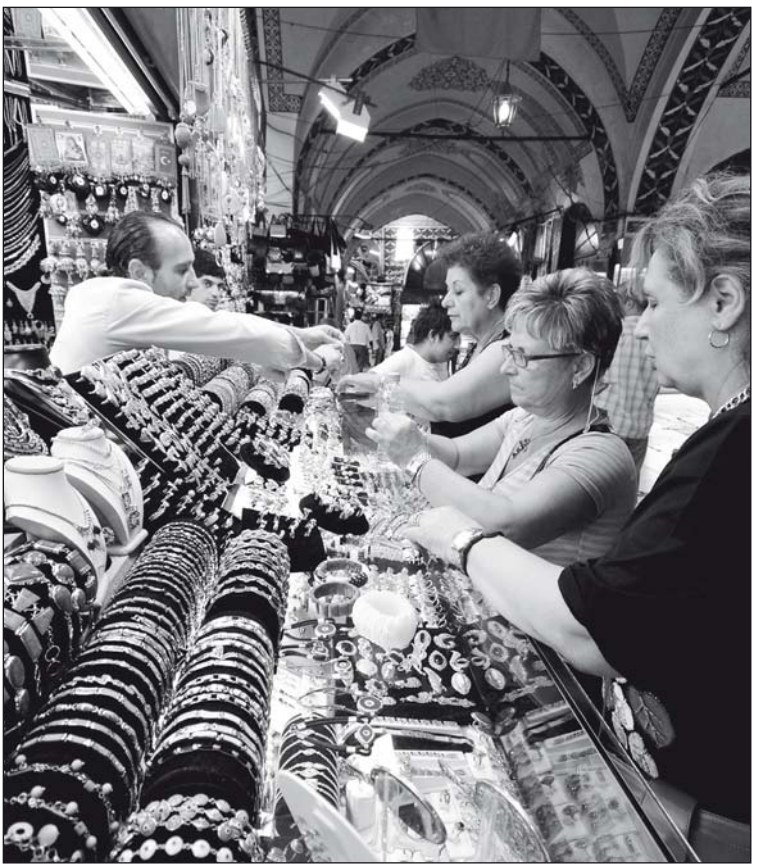
**Opening hours** for many shops are Monday to Saturday 9am to 7pm, though the modern shopping malls stay open daily until 10pm. Supermarkets

and hypermarkets open daily from 9am to 10pm but smaller food shops close much earlier. The Grand Bazaar is open Monday to Saturday 9am to 7pm and is credit-card friendly, as are all shops bar the smallest of grocers (*bakals*) or kiosks.

## Accessories, jewellery and cosmetics

Dressing up and looking good is part and parcel of life to many İstanbullus, often taken to extremes by the well-heeled "ladies that lunch" of wealthy residential districts such as Nişantaşı. **Jewellery** is big business in Turkey, with gold and silver items sold by the gram. Traditionally, gold bangles and the like were purchased as hedges against inflation (earning interest is forbidden in Islam) and given as part of the "bride price" in traditional marriages. The Grand Bazaar and nearby Nuruosmaniye Caddesi are two good places to look for traditional and antique jewellery, Beyoğlu, Nişantaşı and the malls for modern designs.





▲ Shopping for jewellery in the Grand Bazaar

**Ela Cindoruk and Nazan Pak Atiye Sok 14/5, Teşvikiye ☎0212/232 2664.** Small and exclusive gallery/shop run by a talented duo, one of whom studied jewellery design at Parsons School of Design in New York, the other under a master atelier in the Grand Bazaar. As well as their own designs, they also stock items by internationally renowned designers.

**Lush İstiklal Cad 203, Beyoğlu ☎0212/243 7961. Mon–Fri 11am–10pm, Fri & Sat 11am–11pm, Sun noon–10pm.** Attractively displayed range of handmade and natural soaps, creams, shampoos and so on, fashioned to look like ice creams, chocolates and all things edible.

**MAC İstiklal Cad 74, Beyoğlu ☎0212/292 7270. Daily 10am–10pm.** Set against a startling black and white interior, this store has an amazing array of bright cosmetics. Using international and seasonal themes, experiment on yourself or go for a full makeover.

**Mor Takı Turnacı Başı Cad 10B, off İstiklal Cad, Beyoğlu ☎0212/292 8817. Mon–Sat 10.30am–8.30pm.** Cool, modern interior with an interesting range of handmade, chunky jewellery.

**Urart Abdi İpekçi Cad 18/1, Nişantaşı ☎0212/246 7194. Mon–Sat 9am–7pm.** This place has been going for well over thirty years. Very upmarket jewellery, with work based on ancient Anatolian and Central Asian designs. They charge big bucks for their finely wrought stuff but at least pump some of it back into the arts in Turkey through sponsorship of events such as the Golden Orange Film Festival.

## Antiques and bric-a-brac

If you're expecting to find a real bargain, you'll probably be disappointed – the average İstanbullu may care little for the old and worn, but in a city of over fifteen million those that do are enough to ensure a buoyant price for the **antiques** available. Bear in mind that you're supposed to have clearance from the Museums Directorate to take anything out of the country that's over one hundred years old – in practice, nobody is going to worry about a nineteenth-century biscuit tin, but a seventeenth-century Ottoman sword is a different matter. The best place for twentieth-century items up to 1980s retro stuff are the streets leading down from İstiklal Caddesi in Çukurcuma, or one of the flea markets (see p.233).

**Atrium Tünel Geçiti 7, İs Han building, off İstiklal Cad, Beyoğlu ☎0212/2514 3602. Mon–Sat 9am–7pm.** Pricier than the places down in Çukurcuma but with a good selection of miniatures, ceramics, maps and prints.

**Kato Export Halıcılar Cad 55, Kapalı Çarşi ☎0212/526 4551. Daily 9am–7pm.** Ottoman copper and Byzantine icons from the eighteenth and nineteentfh centuries.

**Levant Cnr of Ağa Hamam Cad & Turancıbaşı Cad, off İstiklal Cad, Beyoğlu ☎0212/244 1965. Mon–Sat 9am–7pm.** Eclectic range of wares in a funky shop occupying a nice corner plot where Turnacabaşı Cad becomes Ağ a Hamam Cad. From Greek Orthodox icons to 1950s tin toys and Erickson phones to kitsch figurines.

**Leyla Altıpatlar Sok 10, Çukurcuma ☎0212/293 7410. Mon–Sat 10am–7pm.** This well-established shop stocks all manner of antique clothing, from the late nineteenth century to the 1960s, plus all sorts of cloth-related items – including embroidered cushions and throws – collected by enthusiast Leyla Seyhanlı.

**Müstamel Eşya Evi Turancıbaşı Cad 38/1, off İstiklal Cad, Beyoğlu ☎0212/245 2110. Mon–Sat 9am–7pm.** Spread over two floors, this retro-orientated shop run by friendly, architect-trained Aslıhan Kendiroğlu, concentrates on the 1950s to the 1970s, from Bakelite phones to chrome light-fixtures and furniture to clothes.

**Selim Mumcu Yenicarşı Cad 7/C, off İstiklal Cad, Beyoğlu ☎0212/244 9619. Mon–Sat 10am–7pm.** Mainly secondhand books, but also does a nice line in tin toys and old (1960s and onwards) cinema posters.

## Carpets and kilims

Turkish **carpets and kilims** are world-famous, and with the best selection to be found in İstanbul, it's not surprising that buying one is high on many people's lists. Be warned, though, that they are no longer necessarily cheaper in Turkey than overseas. It's also worth knowing that if you are introduced to a carpet dealer by a tout (and there are plenty of those hanging around Sultanahmet and the Grand Bazaar) or tour operator, a hefty commission will be added. It's very easy to be drawn into buying something you don't really want at a price you can barely afford once you've been smooth-talked and drip-fed with copious quantities of apple tea. It's still possible to get a good purchase here, and enjoy the process, providing you heed the following tips:

- Do some research, preferably before you leave home (check out some of the books reviewed on p.344).
- Avoid buying in the first shop you visit, and look around several. You can always go back – preferably the next day, when you've had time to think about it.
- Don't be embarrassed at how many carpets the dealer is laying out for you – that's his (or usually his lowly assistant's) job.
- Ask as many questions about the pieces that interest you as you can – this will test the dealer's worth, and could give you some interesting historical background should you make a purchase.
- Check the pieces for flaws, marks, density of weave, etc – this way, the dealer will know you're serious.
- Even in the most reputable shop bargaining is essential. Whatever you do, don't engage in the process if you've no intention of buying.
- You'll probably get a better deal for cash – this will also help overcome the temptation to credit-card splurge.
- Most important of all, only buy the piece if you really like it and are sure it'll look the part back home – any other considerations such as future appreciation are mere distractions.



# Books

There are some good stockists of English-language **books** around the city, and it's also rewarding to browse through the secondhand-book markets and shops. The best-known Sahaflar Çarşısı (Old Book Market) is the one at Beyazit (see p.97), though it also sells a reasonable selection of new titles. Numerous second-hand bookstores cluster in Beyoğlu, especially in the backstreets off the east side of İstiklal Caddesi and down towards the Çukurcuma antique district. The annual **İstanbul Book Fair** in late October is held in the İstanbul Sergi Sarayı on Meşrutiyet Caddesi, near the *Pera Palas Hotel*.

**Ada İstiklal Cad 20 ☎0212//251 3878. Mon–Fri 7am–10pm, Sat & Sun 9am–10pm.** Now as much a café as a bookshop, and a good source of glossy coffee-table books; also sells Turkish and foreign CDs and DVDs and is a very convenient Biletix outlet.

**Aypa Kitabevi Mimar Mehmet Ağa Cad 19, Sultanahmet ☎0212/516 0100. Daily 6.30am–8.30pm.** Broad range of books, cards and maps.

**Beyoğlu Sahaflar Çarşısı İstiklal Cad, Beyoğlu.** Good book market in the streets surrounding the Balık Pazarı (Fish Market), where some of the shops specialize in English-language texts.

**Denizler Kitabevi İstiklal Cad 395, Beyoğlu ☎0212/249 8893. Mon–Sat 9.30am–7.30pm.** Specialists in nautical books and charts, plus an extensive range of collectors' books on Turkey and the Ottomans.

### Carpet or kilim?

A **kilim**, is a pile-less, flat-woven wool rug. The better-quality ones are double-sided (that is, the pattern should look much the same top or bottom). A *cicim* is a kilim with additional, raised designs stitched onto it; while the *sumak* technique, confined in Turkey to saddlebags, involves wrapping extra threads around the warp. By and large, kilims, traditionally woven by nomadic or transhumant Anatolian tribal groupings, are generally cheaper and more affordable than carpets. Turkish **carpets** are single-sided, with a pile, and can be wool, silk or a mixture of both. Needless to say, the higher the silk content, the more expensive the rug.

### Dealers

The following are all based in the Grand Bazaar (Mon–Sat 9am–7pm).

**Adnan & Hasan** Halıcılar Cad 89–92 ⓣ0212/527 9887, ⓦwww.adnanandhasan.com. A wide range of modern and antique kilims and carpets from a reputable dealership, established in 1978. Ushak and Hereke carpets vie for shop space with Anatolian and Caucasian kilims.

**Ethnicon** Takkeciler Sok 58–60 ⓣ0212/527 6841, ⓦwww.rthnicon.com. Fixed prices for kilims made in the traditional way (with natural dyes and no child labour) but with contemporary (often large, geometric blocks of colour) styling.

**Galeri Şirvan** Halıcılar Cad 50–54 ⓣ0212/520 6224. Internationally known dealer Erol Kazancı specializes in older pieces, so don't expect anything cheap, but he does have a good reputation and also stocks some modern stuff.

**Şişko Osman** Zincirli Han ⓣ0212/528 3548, ⓦwww.siskoosman.com. Arguably the most knowledgeable dealer in the Grand Bazaar, reputable Şişko ("Fat") Osman's family origins are in the east of Turkey, but he has been flogging top-quality rugs to all-comers (including the rich and famous) here for many years. Over sixty percent of his clients are Turks, which gives some idea of the quality of the (mainly) dowry pieces on offer here. His kilims range from €400 to €2500 and carpets €500 to €2500 – excluding the more expensive genuine period pieces, some dating back to the eighteenth century, stocked in one of his four adjacent shops.



**Dünya Kitabevi İstiklal Cad 469, Beyoğlu.** Upmarket outlet specializing in coffee-table hardbacks and a broad range of English-language newspapers and magazines. Café on site for leisurely reading.

**Eren Sofyala Sok 34, Tünel, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/251 2858, ⓦwww.en.eren.com.tr.** Art and history books, old maps and miniatures. Comprehensive website (in English) for ordering specialist books.

**Galeri Kayseri Divan Yolu 58, Sultanahmet ⓣ0212/512 0456. Daily 9am–8.30pm.** The biggest distributor of English-language books in Turkey, with a vast range of texts on Ottoman history and all other imaginable Turkish – and particularly Istanbul – topics.

**Greenhouse Bookshop Café Moda Cad 28, Kadiköy ⓣ0216/550 4961. Mon & Wed–Sat 10am–6.30pm.** Managed by an English woman and stocking an excellent range of books in English, including an extensive children's department.

**Homer Yeni Çarşşı Cad 28, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/249 5902, ⓦwww.homerbooks.com. Mon–Sat 10am–7.30pm.** Arguably the best bookshop in the city, with a wonderful selection of everything archeological, historical and cultural written on Turkey. There's a good selection of English children's books, and the staff are very helpful.

**Librairie de Pera Galapdede Cad 22, Tünel, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/243 3991. Daily 9am–7pm.** Excellent selection of antiquarian books, including English-language ones, plus maps of the Ottoman Empire, prints and photographs.

**Pandora Büyükparmakkapı Sok 3, off İstiklal Cad, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/243 3503, ⓦwww.pandora.com.tr. Mon–Thurs 10am–8pm, Fri & Sat 10am–9pm, Sun 1–8pm.** Split onto opposite sides of the road – with one side Turkish and the other containing an excellent selection of foreign-language books on three storeys; carries some gay

literature and will order books on request. Now has branches in other parts of Istanbul, especially around the universities.

**Sahaflar Çarşısı Sahaflar Sok, Beyazit.** Between the Grand Bazaar and the Beyazit Camii, this historic (it dates back to the early Ottoman period) collection of small bookshops now concentrates on textbooks for students from the nearby university but also has a reasonable selection of guides and other books about the city.

## Food and spices

Turkey is a major producer and consumer of **herbs** and **spices**, and İstanbul is a great place to stock up on them, most obviously in the atmospheric **Mısır Çarşısı** (Spice Bazaar) – look out in particular for red *pul biber* (chilli flakes), *isot* (extra-hot chilli flakes, virtually black in colour), *kekik* (thyme), *nane* (mint) and *kimyon*. They're more than just a novelty, but the strings of dried peppers, aubergines and okra that Turks use over the winter when the fresh product is not available double as colourful kitchen decorations.

Well worth buying is *nar ekşisi*, the viscous pomegranate **syrup** used so liberally in many Turkish salads, sold in small bottles. Another unusual product is *pekmez*, a grape syrup usually made from either grapes or mulberries – it makes a sweet but healthy topping for yoghurt.

Turkish **coffee** (*Türk kahvesi*) is about as traditional a Turkish product as you can get, though you'll need to buy a small pan known as a *kahve tenceresi* if you want to make it properly back home. Dried **fruits** are both great value and delicious – especially *kayışi* (apricots), *dut* (mulberries) and *incir* (figs) – as are pistachios (usually known as *Antep fistiği*, after the town in southest Turkey where they're grown), *fındık* (hazelnuts), which come from the Black Sea region, *ceviz* (walnuts) and *badem* (almonds). Then, of course, in all its glutinous splendour, there is *lokum*; known in the west as **Turkish Delight**, there are in fact many varieties of this traditional favourite – and none of them chocolate covered.

**Ali Muhidin Haci Bekir Hamidiye Cad 83, Eminönü ☎0212/522 0666. Mon–Sat 8am–9pm, Sun 9am–9pm.** Founded in 1777, this is the best place in the city to buy Turkish Delight (choose from over twenty varieties) and more unusual delicacies such as *fındıklı ezmesi* (hazelnut marzipan). The interior is a delight, with an eye-catching array of sugary treats displayed on period wooden shelves and in glass-fronted cabinets. It's tricky to find, in the bustling narrow streets near the Spice Bazaar but well worth the effort.

**Balık Pazarı Nevizade Sokak, off İstiklal Cad, Beyoğlu. Daily 8am–7pm.** The Fish Market is a fascinating daily market selling much more than just fish – there's everything from ducks, quails, regional cheeses, coffee beans and spices to eggs, *crème fraîche* and Beluga caviar scooped from a bucket, as well as more mundane items such as olives and pickled vegetables.

**Bebek Badem Ezmesici Cevdet Paşa Cad 51/B ☎0212/263 5984. Daily 9am–7pm.** Opened in 1904, it still produces almond marzipan sweets to the original recipe – hardly surprising, as it has remained in the hands of the same family all this time. It's not cheap (nothing in the swanky Bosphorus-front suburb of Bebek is), but it's authentic, and the little shop a period delight.

**Güllüoğlu Mumhane Cad 171, Karaköy ☎0212/293 0910. Daily 10am–midnight.** Arguably the best *baklava* in the city, delicious, buttery and nut-filled. If you're looking to take some home, this is the place to buy it – not only is it the best, but it's not so syrupy as other brands and therefore less likely to leak over your hand-luggage.

**Kurukahveci Mehmet Efendi Tamis Sok 66, Eminönü ☎0212/511 4262/511 4262. Mon–Sat 9am–7pm.** There are always big queues outside this wonderful paean to the aromatic coffee bean. Started in 1871, it's now housed in a rare (for this city) and impressive Art Deco building to the west of the Spice Bazaar. Sells beans and powder for Turkish and filter coffees, plus *sahlep*, the

## Supermarkets and corner shops

İstanbul has plenty of **supermarkets** if the thought of shopping for food at a street market sounds like too much hassle – although the fruit and vegetables are generally inferior in quality and way more expensive, it's easier to buy smaller quantities, and there's invariably a deli-type counter with a great array of different local cheeses, olives, pickles, salami-style meats and, sometimes, ready-prepared *meze*. The upmarket Macrocenter supermarkets at Abdi İpekçi Cad 24, Nişantaşı and Muallimnaci Caddesi down on the Bosphorus in Kuruçeşme are good bets; alternatively, all the malls listed on p.235 have a supermarket – look out for the names Migros, Real, Tansaş and Corona. There are also smaller outlets, known as *market* or *bakkal*, all over the city, which are basically **corner shops** selling a limited range of fruit and vegetables, soft drinks (and sometimes alcoholic beverages), cheese, olives, packaged food, bread and the like – dearer than the supermarkets but often much more convenient.

ground orchid-root drink so popular in İstanbul in the winter.

**Malatya Pazarı İstiklal Cad 375, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/245 7648, ⓦwww.malatyapazari.com.tr. Daily 9am–7pm.** Malatya, in the far east of Turkey, is famous for its apricots, and you can sample the dried product here. Some come in gift packs stuffed with pistachios and walnuts, plus there's a wide range of nuts, sweets and spices.

**Mısır Çarşısı Eminönü. Daily 9am–7pm.** To choose between the myriad purveyors of different spices, herbs, herbal teas, Turkish Delight, nuts and dried-fruit in the historic Spice Bazaar would be meaningless. Don't buy this kind of stuff in the Grand Bazaar, get it here – and don't be afraid to try a bit before parting with your cash.

**Sütte Dudu Osaları Sok 21, Balık Pazarı, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/293 9292. Daily 9am–7pm.** Pork, bacon and other hard-to-find ingredients, along with specialist Turkish cheeses.

## High-street, designer and alternative-clothing stores

You'll find all the usual **high-street fashion stores** in İstanbul, including Benetton, Diesel, DKNY, Escada, Lacoste, Levi's and Polo Ralph Lauren, as well as the more upmarket Armani, Versace and Gucci. All the big-name sportswear brands such as Nike, Adidas and Converse have outlets here, too. **Turkish stores** (with multiple branches) to watch out for include: Beymen, Damat Tween, Homestore, Mavi, Mudo City, Mudo, OXXO, Silk and Cashmere, and Yargıcı. Vakko is one of the oldest and best-known fashion chains in İstanbul; Vakkorama is its youth-market offshoot. For **shoes**, look for Desa, Hotiç and Vetrina. **Designer clothing** outlets are mainly located in the shopping malls (see p.235) or in the streets around the districts of Nişantaşı, Osmanbey and Şişli (take any bus north from Taksim Square, from outside *McDonald's*). There are more stores on **İstiklal Caddesi** and **Bağdat Caddesi**, on the Asian side of the Bosphorus near Kadıköy.

**Turkish fashion** is beginning to compete on the catwalks, thanks to Rıfat Özbek, the darling of the European fashion world. Other names to watch out for in Turkish *haute couture* are Bahar Korçan, Gönül Paksoy, Ferruh Karakaşlı and Murat Taşin, all of whom are working with the best Turkish fabrics: leather so fine that it is now processed for the Italian market and sold at inflated prices under Italian labels; Bursa silk; and the universally famous Angora wool. Paksoy also uses hand-processed vegetable dyes. While Turkish designers often imitate European styles, they do occasionally flirt with Eastern motifs and designs, creating more of a distinctive effect.

▲ Shoe sculpture, Nişantaşı

**Bershka İstiklal Cad 227, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/249 11929, ⓦwww.bershka.com.tr. Daily 10am–10pm**. Originating from Spain in 1998, with a mission to make shopping a social experience by including magazines and art in the reasonably spacious layout. Aimed primarily at the under-30s.

**Beyman Akmerkez Mall, Nisbetiye Cad, Etiler ⓣ0212/282 0832. Daily 10am–10pm.** Quality chain store for tailored men's and women's suits, dress shirts, silk ties and scarves, and other accessories for the well-turned-out executive.

**Bis Hayriye Sok 20/3, off İstiklal Cad, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/292 9700. Daily 9am–7pm.** The two sisters who started this business hit on a new-found thirst for alternative street clothing amongst a small coterie of İstanbul youth. With unusual, retro-inspired designs and a host of accessories, it makes a welcome change from the high-street chains.

**Crash Sahkulu Sok 1/A, off Galip Dede Cad, Galata ⓣ0212/252 7743. Mon–Sat 10am–9pm.** Small alternative outlet in up-and-coming Galata, with a good range of individually designed Ts, hoodies, shorts, etc – and some secondhand retro stuff as well

**Gınül Paksoy Atiye Sok 6A, Teşvikiye ⓣ0212/216 9081. Mon–Sat 10am–7pm.** A one-of-a-kind designer, Gınül's clothing and accessories are mostly based on traditional Ottoman designs and motifs, using naturally woven and hand-dyed material.

**Mavi İstiklal Cad 195, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/244 6255. Mon–Sat 10am–10pm, Sun 11am–10pm; and all shopping malls.** Gap-inspired jeans

label, good-quality denim wear, T-shirts, sweat tops and funky bags – and some trendy İstanbul T-shirts that make a welcome alternative to the usual tourist tat.

**OXXO İstiklal Cad 64A, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/249 4263. Mon–Sat 9.30am–9.30pm, Sun 1–9.30pm; and main shopping malls; ⓦwww.OXXO.com.tr.** Trendy store aimed at the under-30s and offering up to twenty new items each week. Quirky and ever-changing gimmicks such as free lemonade and ice cream are a bonus.

**Roll Turnacibaşı Sok 13/1, off İstiklal Cad, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/244 9656, ⓦwww.rollist.com. Mon–Sat 10am–10pm, Sun noon–9.30pm.** Outlet of choice for indie types who want cutting-edge street fashion. Much of their output is generic, but look out for the range of tongue-in-cheek Ts emblazoned with "legendary" Turkish cars such as the Murat 124 and the Anadol. Also stocks second-hand retro-style clothing.

**Silk & Cashmere Akmerkez Mall, Nisbetiye Cad, Etiler ⓣ0212/282 0235. Daily 10am–10pm; and other branches, including a duty-free shop at Atatürk International Airport.** Scarves, hats, gloves, sweaters and shirts, using imported fabrics from China.

**Vakko İstiklal Cad 123–125, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/282 2626; Akmerkez Mall and other branches; ⓦwww.vakko.com.tr.** Classy fifty-year-old Turkish fashion label renowned for its sense of style and use of fine fabrics. The clothes don't come cheap though, and you have to dress up a bit simply to get into the flagship store on İstiklal Cad. At the **Vakko Sales Store**, on Yenicamii Cad 1 in Eminönü, items can be picked up for a quarter of the regular price.

**Yargıcı Vali Konağı Cad 30, Nişantaşı ⓣ0212/225 2912. Mon–Sat 9.30am–7.30pm, Sun 1–6pm; ⓦwww.yaragici.com.tr.** Well-made and reasonably priced clothing, from work suits to sportswear and underwear.



## Budget fashion

Many Western high-street stores produce their clothes in Turkey, and a number of stalls and markets across the city specialize in seconds, production overruns and samples at bargain prices (5TL and up for T-shirts and tops, 20–50TL for jeans and trousers). Fakes abound, so check thoroughly before making a purchase. The most convenient place to look for these items are the various arcades off İstiklal Caddesi; otherwise, try your luck at one of the daily street markets, some of which are listed below.

### Arcades

**Atlas Pasajı Off İstiklal Cad 209, Beyoğlu.** This trendy and historic arcade behind the Atlas Cinema has bargain clothing – plus a number of alternative/street-style clothes outlets, funky jewellery shops, piercing places and CD/DVD shops, plus an amazing selection of original film posters in a couple of the basement stores.

**Beyoğlu İş Merkezi İstiklal Cad 331–369, Beyoğlu. Daily 10am–10pm.** Three floors of largely low-quality, end-of-line and seconds clothing, especially Ts, sweatshirts and jeans, with the occasional genuine bargain for the persistent.

**Terkoz Çıkmaz İş Merkezi Beyoğlu. Daily 10am–10pm.** A side street off İstiklal Cad, next to the Paşabahçe glass store, down towards Tünel, crammed with stalls of badly organized overruns bearing British, French and German high-street names.

### Markets

**Beşiktaş Pazarı Beşiktaş.** Saturday bazaar held in a warren of streets on either side of Şair Nedim Cad (about 10min from the ferry terminal). It's pot luck what you'll find, as just about any kind of clothing can turn up here.

**Salı Pazarı Kuşdili Cad, Kadıköy.** Held on Tues, Fri and Sun, reached by going uphill from the ferry terminal along Söğütlüceşme Cad until it becomes Kuşdili Cad. Similar to the Beşiktaş Pazarı, but with a European-style Sun flea market selling jewellery and antiques.

**Çarşamba Pazarı Fatih.** Occupying the narrow streets close to Fatih Camii, this is the most atmospheric of the city's markets, but better for fruit, vegetables and the like than bargain clothing.

## Giftware and handicrafts

You don't have to splash big money on a carpet or kilim to have something tangible and authentic to remember your visit by. Traditional **ceramics** from the western Anatolian town of Kütahya, including tiles, vases and plates, can be good purchases, as can embroidered tablecloths, cushion covers and towels. Meerschaum pipes, often carved into the shape of Ottoman dignitaries, make an unusual souvenir, as do *peştemals*, the cotton-wraps worn in the city's steamy *hamams*. **Copperware**, still spun (and traditionally tin-plated) in bazaars in far-away Turkish towns such as Gaziantep, is good value, as are the mother-of-pearl inlaid backgammon sets and other **wood** items from the same town. In their own way just as authentic as the traditional Ottoman crafts are the modern twists on old designs sold in upmarket household goods stores such as Paşabahçe – especially **glassware**.

**Abdulla** **Halıcılar Cad 53, Kapalı Çarşı Ⓣ0212/527 3684. Mon–Sat 9am–7pm.** Restrained design is the key to this chic store selling handmade olive oil-based soaps, bath wraps (*peştemal*), bed linen, fluffy towels and the like – it tweaks traditional products to fit the tastes of the city's new elite and Western visitors alike. Also does a tasteful range of mohair rugs. Beautiful displays, helpful staff and fixed prices make it an oasis of peaceful browsing in the sometimes overwhelming Grand Bazaar.

**Ambar** **Kallavi Sok 12, off İstiklal Cad, Beyoğlu Ⓣ0212/292 9277. Mon–Sat 9am–7.30pm, Sun 12.30–7.30pm.** This small, family-run shop sells a great range of organic and natural products from food to soap.

**Deli Kızın Yeri** **Halıcılar Cad 82, Kapalı Çarşı Ⓣ0212/526 1251, Ⓦwww.delikiz.com. Mon–Sat 9am–7pm.** In the Grand Bazaar, "Crazy Lady's Place" sells a vast amount of junk and collectibles, including limited-edition clothes, wall-hangings, scarves, Christmas decorations and unusual objects from Turkish artists. Linda is the "Crazy (American) Lady".

**İstanbul Handicrafts Centre** **Kabasakal Cad 5, Sultanahmet Ⓣ0212/517 6748. Daily 9am–7pm.** Restored *medrese* – an extension to the *Yeşil Ev Hotel* – where artists and craftsmen keep alive traditional skills such as *ebru* marbling, calligraphy, lacemaking and embroidery.

**İstanbul Modern** **Meclis–i Mebusan Cad, Antrpo 4 Ⓣ0212/334 7300, Ⓦwww.istanbulmodern.org. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm.** For a range of trendy posters and cards (usually associated with the exhibitions at this state-of-the art gallery), mugs, mouse-mats, key-fobs, T-shirts and so on, this is the place. There's also a branch in the Kanyon Mall (see p.236).

**İznik Foundation KuruCeşme** **Öksüz Çocuk Sok 7, Beşiktaş Ⓣ0212/287 3243. Mon–Sat 9am–6pm.** The foundation tries to recreate the heyday of İznik tile production (the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries), and the showroom here has good examples (tiles, vases and plates) of their largely successful attempts – at a price.

**Mudo Pera** **İstiklal 401, Beyoğlu Ⓣ0212/251 8682. Mon–Sat 10am–7.30pm.** Worth going in just to see the gorgeous Art Nouveau interior, this long-established outlet has a range of upmarket giftware as well as quality clothing.

**Paşabahçe** **İstiklal 314, Beyoğlu Ⓣ0212/2440544, Ⓦwww.pasabahce.com.tr. Mon–Sat 10am–8pm, Sun 11am–7pm.** Sells a range of well-designed wares that add the finishing touches to the homes of many middle- and upper-class İstanbullus – from cruet sets to juicers, dinner services to clocks. Some of its glass products, made up the Bosphorus in its Beykoz factory, are worth looking out for.

## Leather

**Leather** is still big business in Turkey, and if you are after a belt, bag or jacket, it's worth hunting around – prices aren't as low as they once were, except for poor-quality stuff, and if you buy from one of the many places in the Grand

Bazaar, for example, the chances of getting ripped-off are pretty high. Overall, it's probably better to buy from one of the classier outlets listed below.

**Derimod Akmerkez Mall, Nisbetiye Cad, Etiler ⓣ0212/282 0668. Daily 10am–10pm.** Excellent-quality leather goods – coats, jackets, bags, shoes and other accessories. Classic rather than cutting edge, but then most people don't want to make a short-lived fashion mistake at these prices.

**Derishow Yeşil Çimen Sok 17, Beşiktaş ⓣ0212/258 7014. Mon–Sat 9am–7pm. Also at Akmerkez Mall; Bağdat Cad 381, Suadiye; and Akkavak Sok 18, Nişantaşı.** Derishow is noted for its fine-quality leather goods.

**Desa Abdi İpekçi Cad 5 ⓣ0212/232 1290, ⓦwww.desa com.tr. Mon–Sat 10am–7pm. Also at İstiklal Cad 140, Beyoğlu; and Akmerkez, Capitol and Galleria shopping malls.** Top-quality Turkish designs.

**Koç Deri Kürküçüler Cad 22/46, Kapalı Çarşı ⓣ0212/527 5533.** Established in 1960, this specialist leather shop in the Grand Bazaar runs up stuff for the likes of Armani and Dolce&Gabbana. Needless to say, it's not cheap, but it does have a good reputation – your wallet may be considerably lighter after a purchase, but you won't have been "done".

**Matraş Akmerkez Mall, Nisbetiye Cad, Etiler ⓣ0212/282 0215, ⓦwww.matras.com.tr. Mon–Sat 10am–8pm.** Everything in leather from this quality Turkish store, including wallets, handbags, belts and briefcases.

## Music and musical instruments

Turkish **music** aside, you'll find a good general selection of world music, classical, pop and jazz in the music shops listed below and in the many outlets on İstiklal Caddesi and in the shopping malls. International CDs are often pricier than elsewhere in Europe, as there's no real discounting, but Turkish CDs are considerably cheaper. Traditional **musical instruments** are on sale in the Grand Bazaar, though prices are much better at any one of the myriad instrument shops on and around Galipdede Caddesi, near the upper Tünel station in Beyoğlu.

**D & R Kanyon Mall ⓣ0212/353 0870, ⓦwww.dr.com.tr.** Chain that stocks a decent range of traditional and contemporary Turkish sounds, as well as foreign CDs, DVDs, computer accessories, books, magazines and games. Other branches across the city.

**IMÇ Atatürk Bul, Unkapını.** This dingy concrete shopping precinct just over the Atatürk Bridge, used to the incredulity of local traders as one of the main "exhibition spaces" of the 2007 Biennial, is the nerve centre of the Turkish music business. Not a bad place to buy CDs and musical instruments – though it's slated for demolition.

**Lale Plak Galipdede Cad 1, Tünel, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/293 7739. Daily 9am–7pm.** Funky old-style music store, the best place for traditional Turkish music CDs but even more so for jazz. The staff know their stuff – aided, no doubt, by the continuity of a business that's been going for nigh on fifty years.

**Naturel Müzik Galipdede Cad 103/B, Beyoğlu ⓣ0212/252 3142, ⓦwww.naturelmuzik.com.** A good choice on "music alley", stocked with reasonably priced quality guitars, *bağlama*, *saz*, *ud*, *darasbuka* and other traditional Turkish instruments.

## Shopping malls

Although it's easy to view the US-style mall culture sweeping the city as a body blow to the traditional Turkish way of life, a mall is just a modern version of a bazaar – and whilst the food court may boast burger-flipping places such as *McDonalds* and *Burger King*, there are far more outlets knocking out traditional Turkish fare such as *pide*, *lahmacun* and *köfte*.

**Akmerkez Nisbetiye Cad, Etiler ⓣ0212/282 0170. Daily 10am–10pm. Metro Levent.** One of the first of the new Western-style shopping centres, with restaurants and a cinema, and

shops carrying most top Turkish brands, plus quality European and American outlets.

**Capitol** **Mahir İz Cad, Altunizade ⓣ0216/554 7777. Daily 10am–10pm. Ferry from Eminönü to Üsküdar or Kadıköy, then any dolmuş or bus that runs between these two ferry terminals via Altunizade.** More user-friendly than Akmerkez, with a more affordable mix of Turkish chain stores and international brands (including BHS and Mothercare), two cinemas, a giant food court in the basement, and a large Migros hypermarket.

**Cevahir** **Büyükdere Cad 22, Şişli ⓣ0212/380 0893. Daily 10am–10pm. Metro Levent.** Conveniently located close to the metro, this is said to be the largest mall in Europe. Set over six storeys, it's very popular with Istanbullus, and boasts the inevitable multiplex.

**City's Mall** **Teşvikiye Cad 162, Nişantaşı ⓣ0212/373 3333, ⓦwww.citysnisantasi.com. Daily 10am–10pm.** Upmarket addition to the city's mall scene, well designed, with sleek Art Deco lines. It's exclusive and mainly fashion-orientated – think Louis Vuitton, Dolce&Gabbana, Paul Gaultier and the like. There's an attached luxury multi-screen cinema and a few posh eateries.

**Galleria** **Büyükdere Cad 185, Sahil Yolu, Ataköy ⓣ0212/559 9560. Daily 10am–10pm.** Inconveniently located for most visitors, a 5min walk south along the coast road, Rauf Orbay Cad, from the Bakarköy train station and sea-bus terminal. This is İstanbul's original shopping mall, opened in 1988, and includes an ice-skating rink surrounded by fast-food cafés, a bowling alley, and the best of Turkish and European shops.

**İstinye Park** **İstinye Bayırı Cad, İstinye ⓣ0212/345 5555, ⓦwww.istinyepark.com.tr. Daily 10am–10pm. Metro Levent, then bus #29, or bus #40/B from Beşiktaş.** Out in the prosperous European Bosphorus suburb of İstniye, this domed mall, opened in 2007, boasts nearly three hundred shopping outlets with a mass of designer stores, including DeBeers, Dior, Moschino and Laurent as well as all the big Turkish names, some fifty places to eat and the inevitable cinema complex.

**Kanyon** **Büyükdere Cad 185, Levent ⓣ0212/353 5300. Daily 10am–10pm. Metro Levent.** An "open air" canyon-shaped, four-storey, state-of-the-art shopping mall featuring most popular Western consumer chains for clothes, food, gifts, etc, and an extremely plush cinema.

**Metrocity** **Büyükdere Cad 171, Levent ⓣ0212/344 0660. Daily 10am–10pm. Metro Levent.** Four-floor mall with the usual food court and a range of middle-income-bracket stores.

16

# Sports and activities

By far and away the most popular spectator sport in the country is **football**, and the heart of the game in Turkey is very much the metropolis of Istanbul, which had five teams in the top flight (Süper Ligi) in 2008. Of these, the ones that really count are the so-called Big Three of Beşiktaş, Fenerbahçe and Galatasaray, who have massive support not only in İstanbul but in every town and village throughout Anatolia. **Basketball**, a major component of the sports curriculum in schools throughout the country, is next favourite, its main league again dominated by teams from İstanbul.

Turks' passion for sport is largely confined to the passive (unless you count shouting, banging drums and letting off firecrackers) act of watching. Keeping fit is a minority interest and an alien concept in a city where most people simply work too long or just can't afford to regularly attend the gym. It's hardly surprising, then, that Turkey won a paltry eight medals in the 2008 Olympics. One of those was for wrestling, and the traditional sport of **oil wrestling** remains popular – the place to see it is at the Kırkpınar Festival near Edirne (see p.303).

## Basketball

It's quite understandable why, in a city with so few open spaces and almost a complete lack of playing fields, **basketball** has become the second most popular sport after football. The predominantly young and vociferous fan-base of the professional clubs has its roots at high-school level, where the sport has great prominence and inter-school rivalry, fuelled by the usual pom-pom girl style razzamatazz, is fierce. Many club sides are affiliated with the big football teams, and this – combined with the sponsorship lifeblood of the sport here – throws up team names such as Beşiktaş Cola Turka, Fenerbahçe–Ülker (a major confectionary manufacturer) and Galatasaray CafeCrown. The national team, known as the "12 Giant Men" finished second in the 2001 European Championships and sixth in the 2006 World Championships. A few Turkish players have transferred to the NBA, though the traffic is not all one way, and former NBA giant Willie Solomon is part of the Fenerbahçe–Ülker line-up.

For further information on venues, matches and tickets, see Ⓦ www.tbf.org.tr or contact the clubs. Tickets for many matches (10–20TL) are available from Ⓦ www.biletix.com.

**Beşiktaş Cola Turka** BJK Akatlar Spor ve Kültür Kompleksi, Gazeticiler Sitesi, Beşiktaş Ⓣ 0212/283 6600, Ⓦ www.bjk.com.tr.

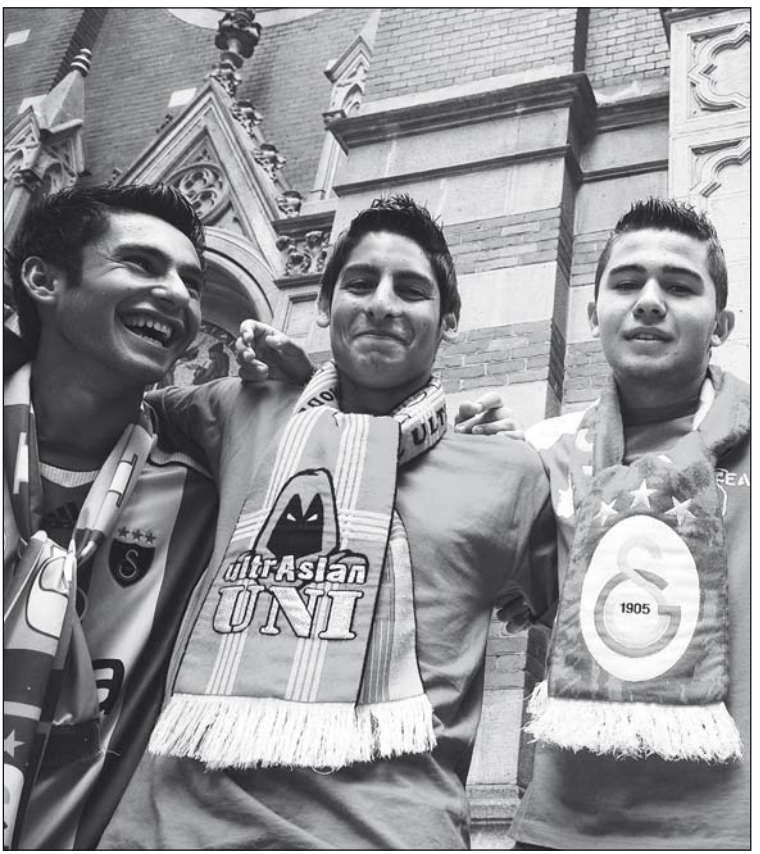
**Fenerbahçe–Ülker** Fenerbahçe Spor Külübü Tesisleri, Kızıltoprak Ⓣ 0216/347 8438, Ⓦ www.fenerbahce.org.

**Galatasaray CafeCrown** Metin Oktay Tesisleri, Florya Ⓣ 0212/574 2901, Ⓦ www.galatasaray.org.

## Football

Turkey are no longer the whipping boys of **international football** (the 8-0 defeat to England in 1987 still smarts), and following a few years' stagnation after finishing third in the 2002 World Cup, have clawed their way back to prominence, and reaching the semi-finals of the 2008 European Championship, aided by a string of stirring last-minute comebacks. Several Turkish players now ply their trade in the best leagues in the world, notably Nihat Kahveci for Villareal in Spain's La Liga and Tuncay Şanlı for Middlesbrough in the English Premiership. When in Istanbul, the national team usually play in one of the Big Three's stadiums, despite the presence of the 75,000-seater Atatürk Olympic Stadium, used for the 2005 UEFA Champions League and 2009 UEFA Cup finals.

The **domestic league** is dominated by Istanbul's **Beşiktaş**, **Fenerbahçe** and **Galatasaray** – only the eastern Black Sea outfit of Trabzonspor have ever managed to wrest the domestic title away from the city – and in recent years has seen an influx of foreign coaches and players such as Roberto Carlos, Harry Kewell and Milan Baros. The season runs from August to May, with a one-month winter break from mid-December to mid-January. Despite supporters'




▲ Galatasary fans

fanaticism, only the derby matches sell out quickly, and tickets for other games are usually easy to come by – most "fanatics" watch the matches on TV, either at home (if they can afford it, the 85TL monthly subscription is way beyond many İstanbullu) or on the big screens that dominate many bars and cafés across the city. The televised league matches, invariably featuring one of the Big Three, take place on Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings. The celebrations following derby-match victories are a sight to behold, with carloads of cheering fans hanging out of windows, waving flags and blaring horns. The best place to see the fun is Taksim Square.

**Tickets** for most major matches can be purchased from Biletix (Ⓦ www.biletix.com) or from the ground on match day; for more information in English, see Ⓦ www.budgetairlinefootball.com.

**Beşiktaş İnönü Stadium, Dolmabahçe Cad, Beşiktaş ⓣ0212/236 7202, Ⓦ www.bjk.com.tr. Tickets from 30TL.** The most attractive and convenient (it's the only one of the three the average visitor will see unless they make a special effort) of the city's stadiums, seating up to 32,000 and set into the hillside just above the Bosphorus, near the Dolmabahçe Palace. Beşiktaş, known as the Kara Kartal or Black Eagles, traditionally play in black-and-white striped kit. They have a more working-class image than their rivals and are the least successful, with twelve domestic titles to their credit, the last one in 2003, and an appalling record in Europe. Constant changes of manager have not helped their cause, but in Çarşı, known for it's leftist and anti-authoritarian leanings, they have the most effective and politicized fan group in the city. According to Beşiktaş fans, "*gerçek adam renkli takım tutmaz*" or "real men don't support teams playing in coloured strips" – a reference to the red and yellow of Galatasaray and the blue and yellow of Fenerbahçe.

**Fenerbahaçe Şükrü Saraçoğlu Stadium, Kadiköy ⓣ0216/449 5667, Ⓦ www.fenerbahce.org. Tickets 45–1180TL.** The wealthiest club side in the country, the Sarı Kanarya or Yellow Canaries reached the quarter finals of the 2008 Champions League under the stewardship of Brazilian legend Zico, despite losing out on the domestic title to arch rivals Galatasaray. There stadium is by far the largest (52,000 capacity) and best appointed in the city, set in a valley some twenty minutes' walk behind the waterfront in Kadıköy, in Asian İstanbul. Despite the club's origins in the district's expat (mainly British) and Christian minorities at the start of the twentieth century, it was the favourite of the nationalist Atatürk. Today's big-name supporters include Nobel Prize-winning author Orhan Pamuk. In 2008, they appointed Spain's European Championship-winning coach Luis Aragones as manager in an effort to further their European credentials.

**Galatasaray Ali Sami Yen Stadium, Mecidiköy ⓣ0212/251 5707, Ⓦ www.galatasaray.org. Tickets from 30TL.** Despite winning the league title in 2008 and achieving Turkey's only international success at club level by lifting the UEFA in 2000, Galatasaray's star has

## A spot of bother

Turkish fans may be able to put their differences aside to give the national team passionate and undivided support, but **inter-club rivalry** between the İstanbul clubs is intense and sometimes spills over into violence. Every week in the season sees incidents somewhere in the country – in May 2007, for example, when Fenerbahçe visited their cross-town, cross-continent rivals, Galatasaray, over 12,000 seats were ripped-up, and those that weren't burnt were thrown at the police, forcing the referee to halt the match for over fifteen minutes in the second half. Opposition supporters' coaches are regularly pelted with stones, running battles between opposing fans can rumble on long after the game has finished, and there is also the occasional stabbing – although, as a foreigner, the chances of getting caught up in any of this are very, very slim.

been somewhat eclipsed of late by Fenerbahçe. Know as *Aslan* (lion) *Cimbom* (why is a mystery, as *Cimbom* has no meaning in Turkish), Galatasaray was formed by a group of Muslim students from Beyoğlu's Galatasaray Lycée in 1905. In seemingly perpetual financial turmoil, they moved to the cavernous Atatürk Olympic Stadium for the 2003/4 season, but are now back at the compact, 25,000-seater Ali "Welcome to Hell" Sami Yen. Previous managers have included current national coach Fatih Terim, Graeme Souness (who caused an uproar when he planted a Galatasary banner in the centre circle of Fenerbahçe's pitch following a cup-final victory there in 1996) and George Haji.

## Gyms and swimming pools

By and large, Turks don't **swim**, which is hardly surprising in İstanbul, where there's an almost complete absence of public pools, whilst the Bosphorus is both polluted and notorious for its treacherous currents and the Sea of Marmara just dirty – for cleaner seas, head out to the Princes' Islands (see p.249) or the Black Sea resorts (see p.170). A number of sports clubs and universities do have pools, but the hassle of reaching them, getting a pass (one requires proof of Hepatitis B and C injections) and paying the exorbitant fee makes them hardly worth considering unless you're training for the Olympics. This leaves the pools of the big hotels (or Park Orman; see p.245) as the only rational option. A day pass will be exorbitant, though if you've done several days' hard sightseeing in the midsummer heat you may be tempted to splash out.

Most of the luxury hotels have attached **gyms** or fitness-suites, and if you can't keep away from an exercise-bike or weights machine then you should consider a day pass.

**Ceylan Intercontinental** **Asker Ocağı Cad 1, Taksim ☎0212/368 4444, ⓦwww.istanbul.intercontinental.com.tr. Daily 7am–8pm. Mon–Fri 45TL, Sat & Sun 75TL.** Has the great advantage of being centrally located in Taksim, with a large, heated outdoor pool and pool bar.

**Cirağan Palace Hotel Kempinski** **Cirağan Cad 32, Beşiktaş ☎0212/326 4646, ⓦwww.ciragranplace.com. Daily 7am–11pm. Mon–Fri 115TL, Sat & Sun 175TL.** Indoor and outdoor pools in one of the city's most expensive hotels. The outdoor one is right on the Bosphorus, so you can watch the tankers glide past as you do lengths.

**Enka Sports Club** **Sadi Gülcelik Spor Merkezi, İstinye ☎0212/276 2297. Bus #40 and #40/T.** Has a multi-purpose gym (and a swimming pool and tennis courts) but inconveniently located in this Bosphorus suburb.

**Hilton İstanbul** **Cumhuriyet Cad, Harbiye ☎0212/315 6000. Daily 8am–6pm. Mon–Fri 80TL, Sat & Sun 130TL.** Big, curvaceous outdoor pool with decent café-bar attached, plus an indoor pool. Entry includes use of the fitness centre.

**Ritz Carlton** **Asker Ocağı Cad ☎0212/334 4188, ⓦwww.ritzcarlton.com. Daily 6.30am–10pm. Mon–Fri 75TL, Sat & Sun 100TL.** Monstrous building with indoor and outdoor lap pools, and stunning views over the Bosphorus and the rest of the city.

**Vakkorama** **Osmanlı Sok 13, Taksim ☎0212/251 1571.** Handy central location in the basement of the Vakko department store, with the usual weights and aerobic equipment plus juice bar, sauna and solarium.

## Running and cycling

The vast majority of İstanbullu have little interest in **running** for its own sake (though attitudes are beginning to change) and in the central parts of the city is a pastime for the fanatic only, with crowded and often semi-obstructed pavements, horrendous traffic and consequent pollution, plus legions of

# Eating out

**Turkish cuisine is widely acknowledged as one of the richest – and healthiest – in the world. With its glorious past and the sheer wealth of the present, it's hardly surprising that the very best places to eat are to be found in İstanbul, the nation's cultural and culinary capital.**

**Take a look around the huge kitchens at the Topkapı Palace and you'll soon realize just how important great food was to the Ottoman sultan and his court – a trait inherited by even the most impecunious of the city's residents. Whether you join them at a plastic table in a humble backstreet kebab joint, or in a swish Bosphorus-front fish restaurant, you're sure to enjoy food fit for a sultan.**

Pide, İstiklal Caddesi ▲

Shaving slices off a chicken kebab ▼

Traditional kebab ▼

## Kebapcis

There's far more to the **kebab** than the slivers of dodgy, pitta-wrapped meat and limp salad so often served up outside of Turkey – as a glance through the menu in one of the thousands of *kebapcis* (kebab restaurants) spread throughout the city soon reveals. *İskender*, tender slices of lamb served on a bed of flat-bread and drenched in rich tomato sauce, is perhaps the most revered, but you should also make a point of trying *beyti sarma*, a spicy "sausage" of mince wrapped in a thin-bread sheath, oven-baked and served with yoghurt, and aubergine-enhanced *Ali Nazık*. Kebab restaurants run the gamut from multi-floored palaces to small, basic places with plastic-topped tables. Most also serve up **pide**, a flat oval bread topped with cheese (cheddar-style or goats'), chopped-meat or chicken. For the most authentic kebabs, try *Hamdi Et Lokantası* (see p.196) or *Çiya* (see p.202).

## Lokantas

Just as popular with Turks are traditional restaurants known as **lokantas**. Here the emphasis is often on food cooked and served in liquid (in Turkish, "*sulu yemek*", literally "watery food"). Dishes are laid-out and kept warm in stainless-steel bains-marie – just point to your choice (typically a chickpea or mixed vegetable stew) and take a seat. In poorer neighbourhoods, *lokantas* (from *locanda*, the Italian for "inn") are generally little more than canteens serving up food to hungry workers; others, though, are venerable institutions, packed out with shoppers, businessmen and office workers – try *Haci Abdullah*, *Kanaat* or *Yanyalı Fehmi* (see p.202 for both) for a *lokanta* with class.

## Dessert time

Many traditional establishments don't do **dessert** – you may be given a complimentary plate of carefully chopped fruit, but that's your lot. Instead, you'll need to indulge your sweet tooth between, not after, your meal: *pastanes* (a kind of patisserie) are ubiquitous, and the best of them are superb.

**Baklava**, layers of filo-pastry stuffed with walnut or pistachio nuts, is a perennial favourite, nowadays often consumed with a "healthy" dollop of glutinous **Maraş ice cream**; for the finest in the city, head to *Gülloğlu* in Karakoy (see p.193). For delicious milk-based puddings such as **sutlaç** (oven-baked rice pudding) or **tavukgöğsü** (a curious but delightful mix of strained chicken breast combined into a creamy pudding with semolina and milk), long-standing *Saray* on İstiklal Caddesi (see p.192) is the best bet.

▲ Maraş ice cream

## İstanbul modern

Many Turks, particularly in go-ahead İstanbul, have woken up to the fact that other parts of the world have a way with ingredients, too. **Fusion**, **global**, **Mediterranean** and all kinds of twists on traditional Turkish are on offer in the city's hipper cafés and restaurants. For some top-notch "world" dishes in cool surroundings, try *Mikla* (see p.200), *Changa* (see p.199), *Nu Teras* (see p.200) – or the gourmet café of the very trendy İstanbul Modern gallery (see p.193). Rather more down-to-earth – but still stylish – venues to enjoy Turkish food à la Med are *Müzedechanga* (see p.203) and *Çezayir* (see p.199). There are also some very good **international** food establishments: for Indian, try *Dubb* (see p.196); Thai, *Çokçok* (see p.199); and sushi, *Vogue* (see p.202).

▼ Saray, İstiklal Caddesi

▼ Baklava

Pano Şaraphanesi – a traditional meyhane ▲

Nevizade Sokak ▼

Array of meze ▼

## Meyhanes

İstanbul's **meyhanes** (a kind of tavern) have played an integral role in the city's social life for centuries. The idea of going out to drink liberal amounts of alcohol (traditionally *rakı* or wine), using the flimsy excuse of eating (usually a truckload of *meze* followed by grilled fish or a meat grill) goes back to the Ottoman era, when most of the city's *meyhane* owners were Greek. The majority of the Greeks have long gone, but the tradition is still going strong. The best places to join İstanbullus singing and dancing to the beats of roaming gypsy musicians are Nevizade Sokak and Kumkapı (see p.195 for both).

## Regional specialities

Much of the food served up in households across Turkey probably has its origins in the great court cuisine of the Ottoman Empire, devised in İstanbul then disseminated back into the provinces. Several regions of the country, however, have a very distinctive culinary tradition of their own, best sampled in İstanbul in the unfashionable district of Aksaray.

▸▸ **Hatay** The *Hatay Sofrası* (see p.197) serves up Arab-influenced dishes from the Hatay region, on Turkey's border with Syria. Warm hummus drizzled with olive oil and scattered with pine nuts anyone?

▸▸ **Mardin** From even further east along the Syrian frontier comes delicious *kaburga dolması*, succulent lamb ribs stuffed with scented pilaf rice, the speciality of the appropriately named *Kaburga Sofrası* (see p.198).

▸▸ **Lake Van** The mountainous, ethnically Kurdish region around Turkey's biggest lake is famed for its rich pastures. The *Van Kahvaltı Sofrasi* (see p.191) specializes in an all-day breakfast treat of herb-studded *otlu peynir* cheese and clotted cream with honey.

## Hamams

The **hamam** (Turkish bath) once played a pivotal role in hygiene, social discourse and religious life (they were usually part of a mosque complex, and cleanliness is part and parcel of Islam) in Turkey, but as the standard of living has increased, its importance (and the number of establishments) has drastically declined. As an exercise in nostalgia, however, it's well worth visiting one, particularly as the historic *hamams* of İstanbul, Bursa and Edirne, are architectural gems. The famous **Çağaloğlu** (see p.78) and **Çemberlitaş** *hamams* (see p.93) are, in all honesty, cash-milking machines, and the only Turks you'll see here are the attendants and masseurs – but the surroundings are atmospheric and, of course, very relaxing after a day of slogging around the sights. Better value and more "local" (if a little run-down) are the **Gedikpaşa** (see p.100) and **Süleymaniye** (see p.95) *hamams* in the Old City – or try the **Galatasaray Hamamı** over in Beyoğlu (see p.133). Lounging around on warm marble slabs, your fellow bathers lost in the steam and light streaming in from tiny bottle-glass windows set in an ancient dome, is an experience few people can resist.

The historic *hamams* of the Old City promote themselves remorselessly, and their brochures decorate the foyers of most İstanbul pensions and hotels. If you're out wandering and fancy an impromptu session in one of the smaller, neighbourhood baths, they are usually signposted – if in doubt look for the distinctive roof domes. Some are very run-down, though the Turkish for "cockroach" ("*hamam böceği*" or "*hamam* bug") more likely comes from the roaches' love of humid, rather than dirty, places.

### Hamam practicalities

*Hamams* are either for men or women, or sexually **segregated** on a schedule, with women usually allotted more restricted hours. On entering, leave your **valuables** in a small locking drawer, keeping the key (usually on a wrist thong) with you for the duration. Bring soap and shampoo or buy it in the foyer. Men are supplied with a *peştamal*, a thin, wraparound sarong, women generally enter in knickers but not bra; both sexes get *takunya*, awkward wooden clogs, and later a *havlu* (towel). Leave your clothes in the changing cubicle (*camekan* in Turkish).

The *hararet* or **main bath chamber** ranges from plain to ornate, though any decent *hamam* will be marble-clad at least up to chest height. Two or more *halvets*, semi-private corner rooms with two or three *kurnas* (basins) each, lead off from the main chamber. The internal temperature varies from tryingly hot to barely lukewarm, depending on how well run the baths are. Unless with a friend, it's one customer to a set of taps and basin; refrain from making a big soapy mess in the basin, which is meant for mixing pure water to ideal temperature. Use the scoop-dishes provided to sluice yourself. It's considered good etiquette to clean your marble slab with a few scoopfuls of water before leaving.

At the heart of the *hamam* is the *göbek taşı* or "navel stone", a raised platform positioned over the furnaces that heat the premises. The *göbek taşı* will be piping hot and covered with prostrate figures absorbing the heat. It's also the venue for the (very) vigorous **massages** from the *tellak* or masseur/masseuse. A *kese* (abrasive mitt) session from the same person, in which dead skin and grime are scrubbed away, will probably suit more people. Terms for the *tellaks*' services should be displayed in the foyer. Few *hamams* have a masseuse, so female visitors will have to think very carefully before accepting a massage from a masseur – though this is far from unknown. Scrubs and massages are extra, so make sure you know what you'll be paying.

bemused passers-by just some of the obstacles. Best bets are Yıldız or Emirgan parks (see p.149 & p.165) but dedicated, need-a-fix runners should head out to the Belgrade Forest, Polenezköy or even the Princes' Islands. By far the best time to run in the city is early on a Sunday, with the streets much quieter than at any other time in the week.

## Grand Prix İstanbul

İstanbul hosted its first **Formula 1 Grand Prix** in 2005, at the purpose-built İstanbul Park in Tuzla, some 60km southeast of the city near Tuzla, in Anatolia. The five-kilometre-long track, which twists through undulating, wooded terrain and past a 25,000-seater main stand (the course holds 155,000 spectators), was created by noted designer Hermann Tilke and is one of only three counter-clockwise tracks on the F1 circuit.

Brazilian Felipe Massa won three of the first four races, but sparked controversey in 2006 when he was awarded his trophy by the Mehmet Ali Talat, president of the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus, recognized as a state only by Turkey.

Usually held in May, hotel beds are at a premium for the long-weekend event: Friday and Saturday for the qualifying races, with the final held on Sunday. Special public transport is laid on from various points across the city including Atatürk International Airport, Sultanahmet, Taksim Square, Kadiköy and Levent – alternatively, cross by ferry to Pendik, on the city's Asian shore, and take the bus from there. The website Ⓦ**www.formula1-istanbul.com** has information on travel, hotels, directions to the track and much other general information.

**Tickets** are available online from Ⓦwww.istanbulgptickets.com or Ⓦwww.biltex.com, or from the ticket hotline Ⓣ0216/556 9800.



There are a number of major **running events** on the city streets. Biggest is the Intercontinental Eurasian Marathon, usually held in October, which sees some of the world's top athletes and up to ninety thousand fun-runners cross from Asia into Europe via the Bosphorus Bridge. The Maltepe Coastal Road Race, also held in October, is open to all-comers (see Ⓦwww.maltepe.edu.tr for details).

Things are equally tricky for would-be **cyclists**, though there's a waterfront cycle lane in Kadıköy. Otherwise Büyük Ada, largest of the Princes' Islands, makes an appealing cycling destination (see p.253 for details of bike hire).

# 17

# Kids' İstanbul

Turks adore children in that uninhibited, Mediterranean manner that can be both charming and unnerving to the first-time visitor. Don't be surprised to find your child receive an affectionate pinch on the cheek by a passer-by, often accompanied by the word *maşallah*, which serves both to praise your offspring and ward off the evil-eye, whilst waiters will sometimes unselfconsciously pick a kid up and waltz them off into the kitchen to show their workmates, often accompanied by cries all around of "*çok tatlı*" or "how sweet". Turkish families tend to take their children with them wherever they go and think nothing of letting them run around restaurants until the early hours. In this sense, İstanbul is a great place to visit with kids.

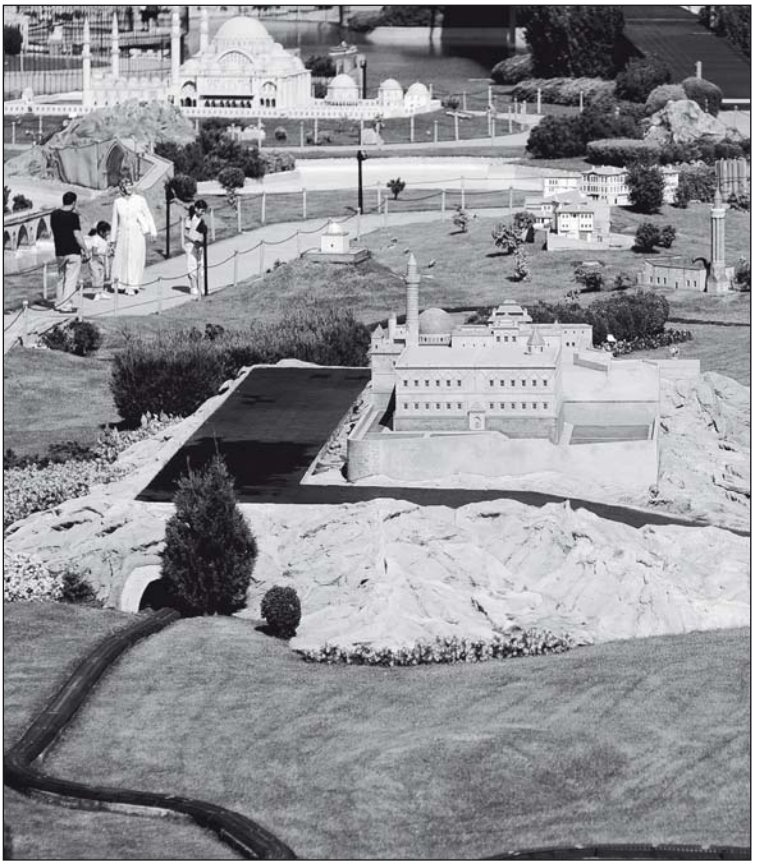
Of course, how much they enjoy the city is largely down to how realistic you are as a parent. Drag them around the Aya Sofya and Topkapı Palace for hours on end and they'll soon get bored; the sheer number of bodies rushing through areas such as the Eminönü waterfront, İstiklal Caddesi or the Grand Bazaar may well intimidate them if you're not careful; and trying to push a buggy down uneven pavements or up near-metre-high kerbs, or getting it onto the often incredibly crowded tram is a nightmare. For a break from the city-centre hassle, head out to a Bosphorus-front parks, take a boat trip, or visit one of the handful of kid-orientated ventures scattered around the city and its environs.

Turkish **food** should appeal to most kids – what's *köfte* rather than a (very) tasty burger, *pide* a pizza without the tomato paste, and *gözleme* a stuffed pancake? *Maraş* ice cream is just as delicious as Italian *gelato* and comes in myriad flavours. In general, restaurants are relaxed and very welcoming to families – just don't expect highchairs.

## Museums, attractions and galleries

The **Archeology Museum** (see p.68) has a small area devoted to youngsters, with a miniature wooden horse of Troy and replica Neolithic dwellings amongst other stuff on show, though kids are just as likely to be enthralled by the museum's wonderful sarcophagi. The **Rahmi M. Koç Industrial Museum** (see p.142) has far more to keep them entertained, with a submarine moored in the Golden Horn to explore, a cute station and length of track, and a cornucopia of vintage cars, motorbikes and planes, plus regular special exhibitions/events aimed specifically at children. The **Military Museum** (see p.135) in Harbiye, with its tanks and Ottoman-era weaponry, may appeal to boys of a certain age.

The **Santralistanbul Energy Museum** (see p.143) allows kids to ride an electricity-producing bike, see the world through a snake's eyes and watch



▲ Miniatürk

lightning bolts in a plasma globe. There are also summer art-based workshops here – though they're in Turkish. **İstanbul Modern** (see p.141) runs summer programmes (for kids aged 4–13), whilst the **Sakıp Sabancı Museum** (see p.165) usually has a child-friendly art/design workshop running alongside its latest exhibition. The **Toy Museum**, though inconveniently located out in Göztepe (see p.154), is as much for adults as kids, with its collection of toys, dolls and the like dating back to the nineteenth century. There are special activities at weekends, including a puppet show. Last but by no means least, **Miniatürk** (see p.143), with its one-hundred-plus pint-sized models of some of İstanbul's (and Turkey's) most impressive monuments and sights, from Atatürk International Airport to the Aya Sofya, is bound to engage their interest.

## Parks

To escape the urban hurly-burly, head for one of the city's parks – although providing little in the way of play equipment, there are normally plenty of

grassy areas, trees for shade and, in the first three listed below, fabulous views down over the Bosphorus.

**Emirgan Parkı** **Emirgan. Daily 9am–6pm.** Combined with a trip to the Sakip Sabancı Museum and lunch at *Sütis* (see p.194) or one of the cafés in the park, this posh Bosphorus suburb is a great day's outing with kids. There's some decent play equipment for little ones, a delightful ornamental lake complete with waterfall and ducks, and the late-Ottoman wooden pavilions are like something out of Heidi. For more information, see p.165.

**Hıdıv Kısır** **Kanlıca.** The grounds of this gorgeous Art Nouveau (ish) villa are more compact than either Yıldız or Emirgan, but have the advantage of being on the Bosphorus Cruise (see p.160), meaning you can enjoy a boat journey up the river, then hop off and taxi-it or walk the short way up the wooded hillside, where the kids can enjoy the open space whilst you relax in the outdoor café and admire the stunning views. For more information, see p.164.

**Park Orman** **Büyükdere Cad, Maslak Ⓣ0212/328 2000, Ⓦwww.parkorman.com.tr. Bus #25/T.** Big outdoor pool open mid-June to mid-Sept (35TL), summer workshops and activities for kids during Minifest (usually the first weekend in June; tickets from Biletix – see p.204), and plenty of picnic areas, woodland trails and open spaces for wandering around in – plus an ice rink and restaurants.

**Yıdız Parkı** **Çırağan Cad, Beşiktaş. Summer 9am–6pm, winter 9am–5.30pm.** A lovely landscaped park full of mature trees for shade on hot summer days. There's a paltry amount of play equipment (for younger kids only), but it's a great place to run around in. There's a café or two, fine Bosphorus views, and the guided tour of the opulent Şale Köşkü is not too demanding for older kids. The park is set on a steep slope, so if you're pushing a buggy: beware. For more information, see p.149.

## Activities

Most kids find boat rides across the Bosphorus as entertaining as the places listed below.

**Aqua Club Dolphin** **Cemal Paşa Cad, Su Oyunları Merkezi, Bahçeşehir Ⓣ0212/672 6161, Ⓦwww.aquaclubdolphin.com. May to mid-Sept. Mon–Fri 30TL, Sat & Sun 35TL, under-12s half price. Bus #76/D or #76/E from Taksim.** Impressive waterpark with all the usual slides, twister bowls and float rides in well-landscaped gardens – but it's a long way out to this wealthy suburb west of the city. For free shuttle buses, see the website.

**Bab Bowling** **Yeşilcam Sok 24, off İstiklal Cad, Beyoğlu Ⓣ0212/251 1595, Ⓦwww.babbowling.com.tr. Daily 10am–midnight.** For older kids, this conveniently situated café has a six-lane bowling alley, pool and an (overpriced) fast-food café.

**Bosphorus Zoo and Botanic Park** **Tuzla Cad 15, Bayramoğlu, Darica, Gebze Ⓣ0262/653 6666, Ⓦwww.bosphoruszoo.com. Daily 9am–5pm. 15TL.** A long way out of town on the Asian side of the city near Gebze, and you really need your own transport to get here. This park is beautifully landscaped and has over 3000 species on show, including lions, lemurs and zebras, plus some colourful birdlife.

**Galleria** **Büyükdere Cad 185, Ataköy Ⓣ0212/559 9560, Ⓦwww.galleriabowling.com. Daily 10am–10pm.** With a skating rink, ten-pin bowling alley and cinema, this now-venerable mall should provide a distraction for bored kids.

**Rainforest Cafe** **İstinyepark Mall, İstinye Bayırı Cad, İstinye Ⓣ0212/345 6262, Ⓦwww.rainforestcafe.com. Daily 10am–10pm. Bus #40.** Popular, jungle-themed restaurant that organizes kids parties, has entertainment and diversions such as robot crocodiles, and serves up child-friendly meals.

## Day-trips

Most kids like boats and the **Bosphorus Cruise** (see p.160) is both great fun and reasonable value. There are two impressive suspension bridges to cruise under, a medley of seaborne traffic of all shapes and sizes to gawp at, and an endless stream of vendors with refreshments ranging from fresh orange juice to yoghurt dusted with icing sugar – and a Byzantine-era castle to explore at the farthest point. Continuing the maritime theme, a trip to the **Princes' Islands** in the Sea of Marmara (see p.251) provides a welcome break from the heat of the city. Best bet is probably Büyük Ada, where you can take a ride in a horse-drawn carriage, hire a bike (older kids only) or splash about in the sea. Bear in mind that both these trips can get very crowded, especially at weekends, so get there early to bag seats for everyone.

A trip to one of the **Black Sea resorts**, Kiliyos or Şile (see p.170 & p.171), is another possibility, though it entails a long bus journey (up to 2hr each way depending on traffic) and there are dangerous currents; the beaches are fine, if very crowded in midsummer. **Polonezköy** (see p.169) on the outskirts of Asian İstanbul en route to Şile, is a little more accessible. A quaint, if rather exclusive, old Polish village, it offers plenty of green, open spaces and a restaurant with kids' facilities, including a playground and pool.

## Shops

Unless you're setting up home here, forget **toys**, as those sold in markets and cheaper stores (largely Far East imports) tend to be more expensive than the same thing would be back home. Baby and toddler **essentials** such as nappies are widely available from all the supermarkets and many *bakkals* (general stores).

**Mothercare** **Akmerkez Mall, Nisbetiye Cad, Etiler (Metro Levent); Cevahir Mall, Büyükdere Cad 22, Şişli (Metro Levent); Galleria Mall, Büyükdere Cad 185, Ataköy (Bakarköy train station); Nişantası.** All that you'd expect from Mothercare, except the prices, which are higher than Europe.

# Out of the City

# Out of the City


18 The Princes' and Marmara islands ..... 249

19 İznik and Termal ..... 259

20 Bursa and Uludağ ..... 267

21 Çanakkale, Troy and Gallipoli ..... 283

22 Edirne ..... 298

18

# The Princes' and Marmara islands

For a break from İstanbul's cultural treasures and vibrant nightlife, it's worth heading south into the **Sea of Marmara**. The **Princes' Islands** are only an hour away by ferry (less by sea bus) and offer a mixture of charming waterfront villages, wooded hills and some beautiful *fin-de-siècle* architecture. In summer, however, they can be very crowded, and given their proximity to such a major metropolis, the sea is inevitably a little polluted. Much further away geographically, but far better for swimming and sun-worshipping (though they can also get very busy in summer), are the **Marmara Islands**. The journey to the nearest island takes two and a half hours, making a day-trip just about feasible, but it's far better to stay overnight and make the most of their scenic setting.

## The Princes' Islands

The **PRINCES' ISLANDS**, situated in the Sea of Marmara some 15km southeast of the city and just a few kilometres off the Asian landmass, have always been a favourite retreat for İstanbullus. Four of the nine islands are easily accessible by ferry from İstanbul, and in the summer public holidays see a steady stream of visitors that at times threaten to destroy the peace and tranquillity. On the largest island, **Büyükada**, the local population of 6500 swells each summer to over 40,000. Most day-trippers, however, do little more than mill around the cafés and restaurants at the ferry landing points. Head out around the coast or, even better, inland, and you'll soon escape the crowds. Apart from the odd police or utility vehicle, no cars are allowed on the islands, so transport is either by foot, *phaeton* (horse-drawn carriage), bike or donkey. Their proximity makes them an easy day-trip from İstanbul, but to really appreciate their laidback charm, it's worth staying over. Book ahead, especially on summer weekends, as demand occasionally outstrips supply.

### Some history

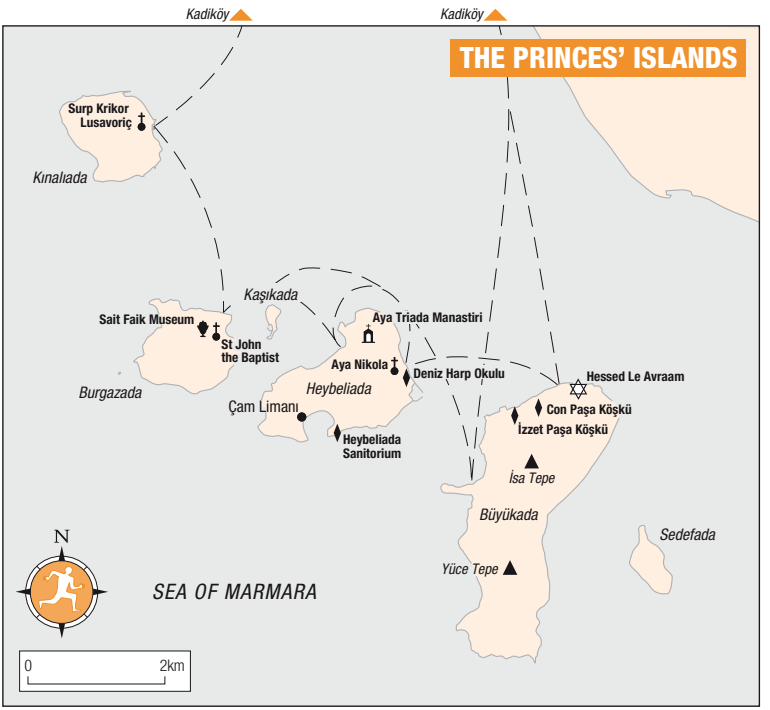
The islands have been inhabited since Classical times, but their first claim to fame derived from the copper mines of **Chalkitis** – modern Heybeliada – long since exhausted (but still visible near Çam Limanı). In the Byzantine era,

numerous convents and monasteries were built on the islands and these became favoured – because of their proximity to the capital and ease of surveillance – as luxurious **prisons** for banished emperors, empresses and princes (often after they had been blinded). After the Conquest, the islands were largely neglected by the Ottoman Turks and became a place of refuge for Greek, Armenian and Jewish communities.

In 1846, a ferry service was established and the islands became popular with Pera's wealthy merchants and bankers, but it was only in the early years of the Republic that they became İstanbul's favourite **summer resort**. Mosques began to appear in the villages, and hotels and apartment buildings soon followed. A Turkish naval college was established on Heybeliada, and the islands received the rubber stamp of Republican respectability when Atatürk's private yacht was moored here as a training ship.

Not all of the islands have romantic connotations. Sivriada, which is uninhabited and cannot be visited, gained public notoriety in 1911 when all the stray dogs in İstanbul were rounded up, shipped out there and left to starve; while Yassıada is best known as a prison island, used for the detention of political dissenters. It was here that Adnan Menderes and two of his former ministers were hanged on September 16, 1961, after a military coup (see p.329).

Since Büyükada and Heybeliada were designated centres of tourism, they've been a focal point for further development, and legislation restricting the height of new buildings is widely flouted. The pressure group **Ada Vakfi** (the Princes' Islands Foundation) continues its attempts to preserve what's left of the islands' heritage.



## Getting there

The Princes' Islands are easy to reach, but get to the ferry at least an hour before departure in summer, especially on Sundays, as the queues can be massive – having a topped-up *akbil* will save you having to queue for a ticket but won't guarantee you a seat so it's still best to get there in plenty of time. İDO **ferries** run from the Adalar Ferry Terminal in Kabataş (handily placed beyond Beşiktaş at the end of the tram line) to the main islands of Kınalıada, Burgazada, Heybeliada and, lastly, Büyükada (summer 17 daily, from 6.50am; winter 9 daily from 6.50am; 4TL return). It takes around fifty minutes to reach Kınalıada, close on an hour and a half to Büyükada. There is also a more expensive but much quicker **sea bus** (*deniz otobüs*) service, also from Kabataş (12 daily, much less frequently in winter; 7TL one way). Unlike the ferries, not all sea-bus departures visit all the islands – check before boarding.

**Island hopping** between the main islands is easy, but check ferry times at the docks and don't rely simply on a timetable; the service is notoriously changeable. An *akbil* or a handful of *jetons* makes island-hopping easier, but remember each ferry "hop" will set you back 2TL.



## Kınalıada

**Kınalıada**, "Henna Island", takes its name from the red colouring of its eastern cliffs; in Greek, it was known as *Proti*, since it's the nearest of the islands to the mainland. Like Heybeliada, Kınalıada's history is notable for exiles, including Romanus IV Diogenes, deposed after his disastrous defeat at the Battle of Manzikert by the Selçuk Turks. Today, its population is seventy percent Armenian, swelled by friends and relatives from the city in summer, and unless you have a particular interest in İstanbul's Armenian community, there is little of interest on the island. However, it's a favourite for swimming and its beaches are less polluted by sewage than those of its neighbours. If you do visit, it's worth taking a peek at the church of **Surp Krikor Lusavoriç**, a short way inland from the ferry landing; completed in 1857, it is the sole Armenian Gregorian church on the islands. On a hilltop overlooking the town is a monastery originally built in the early Byzantine era, though the church and associated buildings now on the site date back only to the nineteenth century.

## Burgazada

**Burgazada** has a fascinating small museum (Burgaz Çayırı Sok 15; Tues–Fri 10am–noon & 2–5pm, Sat 10am–noon; free), dedicated to the novelist Sait Faik (often described as the Turkish Mark Twain), who lived here, and the house has been so carefully preserved that you feel like you're trespassing. In the writer's bedroom a pair of pyjamas is neatly folded on the bed, with a towel on the rack beside it. You get an immediate impression of the man, whose exceptional character is evidenced by the simple bohemian style of furnishings in his island home. A useful locator for the museum is the imposing nineteenth-century Greek Orthodox **Church of St John the Baptist**, whose dome dominates the main settlement as you approach the island on the ferry. It's usually locked, as is the associated sacred spring, or *ayazma*, located just below the church. Whilst Burgazada lacks the quantity of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century houses that make Büyükada so attractive, it more than makes up for this with its easy charm and narrow streets lined with palm, fig, bay and oleander. Much of the mature forest that once carpeted the island

burnt in 2003, but is slowly being regenerated and Burgazada is pleasantly green once again.

A quarter of an hour's walk from the ferry terminal to the western part of the island brings you to the *Kalpazankaya* restaurant, which has terraces looking out over a little headland to the sea. More convenient is the Greek-run *Barba Yani* restaurant on Yalı Caddesi, which serves up reasonably priced fish dishes and *meze* (expect to pay around 25TL per head including an alcoholic drink). With its natty chequered tablecloths and harbourfront location (some 50m to the left of the jetty as you land), it's an atmospheric spot to while away the time waiting for the next ferry back to the city.

## Heybeliada

**Heybeliada**, or the "Island of the Saddlebag", has managed to retain much of its village identity, and there's a strong community spirit among its permanent residents. It's a beautiful place, known for the beaches to which İstanbul residents flock in their hundreds at weekends. The family of the famous İstanbul writer Orhan Pamuk regularly spent the summer in one of the island's fine wooden Art Nouveau-style mansions.



### Arrival and information

Ferries and sea buses dock at the ferry terminal on the main quayside of Rıhtım Caddesi. Walking and cycling are good ways to enjoy Heybeliada, its pine forests and hills making for scenic rides and rambles; there's bike rental near the quayside at Imralı Sok 3. Prices for *phaetons* from Ayyıldız Caddesi (which runs parallel to the front) to various destinations around the island are posted on a board in the street; tours of the island are also available (short tours for 16TL, longer ones 25TL).

### Accommodation and eating

Heybeliada is more low-key and accommodation cheaper than neighbouring Büyükada, though booking in advance is recommended, particularly at weekends. The restaurants cater to locals all year round, and consequently there are plenty to choose from – generally good, simple and cheap, offering standard *lokanta*, kebab and *pide* fare; most are situated on Ayyıldız Caddesi. The *Gökşins Ambrosia* is a good bet, with a fish meal and basic *meze* around 25TL per head.

**Merit Halki Palas** **Refah Şehitler Cad 88 ⓣ0216/351 0025, ⓦwww.merithotels.com.** Nineteenth-century villa, restored in dubious taste by the Merit Hotel group as the only five-star hotel on the islands, incorporating gym, jacuzzi and outdoor pool. In the restaurant, you can get a three-course meal, usually featuring fish, for around 120TL a head, served in a lovely poolside setting. 230–255TL

**Özdemir Pansiyon** **Ayyıldız Cad 41 ⓣ0216/351 1866, ⓦwww.adalar-ozdemirpansiyon.com.** Cheapest option on the island, offering tiny chalet-type en-suite rooms with a shower over squat toilets, plus larger rooms in the main block. Both are comfortable enough. Note that prices rise by fifty percent on Fri & Sat. No breakfast. 50–75TL

**Prenset Pansiyon** **Ayyıldız Cad 44–42/A ⓣ216/351 0039, ⓦwww.halkiprenset.com.** This converted apartment building with wood-trimmed exterior offers reasonable value, despite most rooms not having views. Friendly management, comfortable rooms with immaculate modern bathrooms, and central heating in winter. Prices, which include breakfast, rise by fifty percent at weekends. 100TL

## The island

Heybeliada's main point of interest is the nineteenth-century **Aya Triada Manastiri**, the Greek Orthodox School of Theology, majestically situated on the peak of the island's northernmost hill. It's a pleasant fifteen-minute walk through pine forest (or take a *phaeton*; see below), but getting inside the compound is by appointment only (Mon–Sat 10am–noon & 2–4pm; free; ⓣ0216/351 8563). You'll need to provide scholarship credentials to view the library of 230,000 books, including an important collection of Byzantine manuscripts. The building is set in beautiful grounds, and encloses a pretty, eight-hundred-year-old church, with a stunning gilt iconostasis. Orthodox priests were trained here until the government closed it in 1973 (attempts to reopen it are ongoing but continue to founder), and you can see the dusty classroom filled with age-blackened desks where the acolytes received instruction.

Other buildings you might come across during a stroll around the island include the Heybeliada Sanatorium, a private home for TB sufferers located off Çam Limanı Yolu on the south side of the island, and the **Deniz Harp Okulu** (Naval High School), on the east side of the island, along the coast road from the main jetty, which was originally the Naval War Academy, situated here since 1852. There's also a further Greek Orthodox church, the Aya Nikola, a prominent red-and-cream building with a curious clock tower, just behind the waterfront in the town centre.

There are several beaches around Heybeliada, though swimming in the polluted waters is at your own risk.

# Büyükada

**Büyükada** (the "Great Island", the original *Prinkipo*, or "Princes' Island", in Greek) is the largest of the islands and has long been inhabited by minorities. It has traditionally been a place of retreat or exile, and Leon Trotsky lived here from 1929 to 1933, when he began to write his *History of the Russian Revolution*.

## Arrival and information

**Ferries** and **sea buses** dock at two adjacent terminals on Büyük İskele Caddesi in Büyükada's main town, from where the main square and most of the hotels, restaurants and shops are just a short walk away. With motor vehicles banned, there are **bike rental** shops (3TL per hour or 12TL per day) everywhere. Make sure you check that the brakes and gears work properly before setting off – if you're planning to cycle inland, it's hilly and you'll need them. You'll also need to leave some ID as a guarantor. **Phaeton** (horse-and-carriage) tours (for up to four people; short tour 35TL, long tour 40TL) leave from the *phaeton* park off the main square on Isa Çelebi Sokak, 50m above the ferry terminal. **Donkey rides** up the hills (8TL) start from a little park just up Kadayoran Caddesi from the centre of town.

## Accommodation

**Accommodation** is uniformly expensive, though the chance to stay in a grand restored mansion may be appealing.

**Büyükada Princess İskele Meydani ⓣ0216/382 1628, ⓦwww.buyukadaprincess.com.** Offers neatly furnished a/c rooms with TV and mini-bar in a well-restored late nineteenth-century building with pool. Prices may be negotiable, and drop anyway at the beginning and end of the season by up to twenty percent. 150TL

**Naya Retreat Maden, Yılmaz Türk Cad 96 ⓣ0216/382 4598, ⓦwww.nayaretreats.com.**

A work-in-progress, this accommodation/alternative therapy/chill-out/workshop venue, set in lush gardens a 20min walk east of the ferry terminal, offers two-person wooden bungalows for 80TL and two-berth tents for half that. If vegetarianism, yoga and the alternative life appeal to you, this could just be the ticket.

**Splendid Palace Hotel** Nisan Cad 23 ⓣ0216/382 6950, ⓦ www.splendidhotel.net/index.asp. Dating from 1908, and once host to Edward VIII and Mrs Simpson, it has serious *fin-de-siècle* grandeur, with cupolas, balconies, a good restaurant, excellent service and a garden with a swimming pool. 245TL

## The island

Leon Trotsky spent most of his time at **İzzet Paşa Köşkü**, an attractive wooden mansion on Çankaya Caddesi, built by a Greek banker and later owned by Abdülhamid's chief of police. It was also the house where, in 1933, Trotsky's daughter committed suicide. On the same road, further back towards the ferry landing, is another fine wooden mansion, the **Con Paşa Köşkü**, with a two-storey colonnaded portico, elaborately carved in honey-coloured wood. These large mansions of Büyükada tend to have beautiful gardens full of magnolia, mimosa and jasmine, and in the surrounding pine forests myrtle, lilac and rock roses grow wild, so the scents of the island on a summer's evening are one of its most memorable aspects.

The island consists of two hills, both surmounted by monasteries. The southernmost, **Yüce Tepe**, is the location of the **Monastery of St George**, probably on the site of a twelfth-century building. Close up, it consists of a series of chapels on three levels, with the oldest – containing a sacred spring – on the lowest level. In Byzantine times, the monastery functioned as an asylum – the iron rings set into the floor of the chapels were used for restraining the inmates. To reach St George, take a *phaeton* to the small park on the main road that runs

▲ Horse and carriage, Büyükada

over the hill, from where a steep cobbled path (plied by donkeys) leads up several hundred metres to the monastery. The cycle ride from the town to the monastery is a worthwhile alternative – cycle west from the central square behind the waterfront, past the *Splendid Palas* hotel and onto Çankaya Caddesi, with its succession of gorgeous wooden *fin-de-siècle* villas, before branching left and up into the forest; it takes around thirty minutes to cycle to the donkey stands at the foot of the hill.

The monastery on the northern hill, **İsa Tepe**, is a nineteenth-century building. Three families still inhabit the precincts, and there are services in the chapel on Sundays. The adjacent **café** is famous for its wine, which was at one time produced at the monastery itself.

A ten-minute walk out of town heading left from the ferry terminal, three blocks behind the seafront, is the fine domed nineteenth-century **synagogue** of Hessed Le Avraam, with a facade that combines Neoclassicism with mock-Orientalism. Unfortunately, it is locked and, like all of İstanbul's synagogues, has a security guard stationed outside in a small booth. To gain entry, contact the Chief Rabbinate at least 24 hours in advance on ☎0212/2441980.

### Eating

There are lots of good fish **restaurants** along the seafront to the left of the ferry terminal. One street back from the shore road, İskele Caddesi has a selection of cheaper **cafés**, selling all the usual Turkish dishes.

**Ada Ev Yemekleri** **Recep Koç Cad 34.** The craze for home-style cooking restaurants has hit Büyükada with this simple eatery a block back and some 200m left of the ferry terminal. Great for vegetarians, it offers up tasty staples such as *bamiya* (stewed okra), *zeytin yağlı fasuliye* (green beans in olive oil) and a tasty spinach dish for 5TL a portion. Meat-eaters may be more interested in the *mantı* (a kind of ravioli served in a yoghurt sauce) or the *karnıyarık* (half an aubergine topped with tasty mince). Serves breakfast but is unlicensed and closes at 9.30pm.

**Alibaba Restaurant** **Gülistan Cad 20.** A good choice of the several restaurants on the waterfront to the left of the ferry terminal with similar prices and ambience. It's a friendly, atmospheric place in an old (1927) high-ceilinged building, with white tablecloths and pictures of Atatürk and his side-kick İsmet İnönü (both of whom ate here) on the wall. Farmed-fish mains from 12TL, sea-caught fish from 70TL a kilo (ample for two people), plus the usual selection of *meze*. Alcohol served.

**Yücetepe Kır Gazino** **Aya Yorgi, Yüce Tepe.** Simple but excellent restaurant right on Yüce Tepe, the hilltop crowned by the Monastery of St George, offering superb views across the island and the Sea of Marmara. The food is basic but freshly prepared and hearty, with deep-fried, cheese-filled *börek* one of the highlights. The home-made chips are delicious, as is the yoghurt-drenched aubergine starter. A satisfying lunch with a beer will set you back 15–20TL.

# The Marmara Islands

The **MARMARA ISLANDS**, set in the western half of the Sea of Marmara, are seldom visited by foreigners. The vast majority of the people who come here are working- or lower-middle-class Turks from the big conurbations in the region – especially İstanbul. Monied locals now head down to the Aegean or Mediterranean resorts or the Princes' Islands, and most of the development here was done (badly) in the 1970s and '80s. The major settlements are nondescript, with little conscious preservation ethic, but the swimming is fine, and the

### Getting there

By far the best way to get to the islands from İstanbul is by **sea bus**, which departs daily in summer from the Yenkapı ferry terminal (mid- to end June & early to mid-Sept 2 daily; July & Aug 6 daily; 2hr 35min to Marmara, 3hr to Avşa). **Car ferries** run between the islands and Erdek on the Kapadagı peninsula, on the southern side of the Sea of Marmara (mid-June to mid-Sept 3 daily; rest of year 2 daily; 3hr; 6.5TL, 24TL cars), which might be useful if you're on your way to or from Bursa or Çanakkale.

scenery – the horizon studded with islets – is as close to the Greek archipelagos as you'll find in Turkey. The trip on the sea bus out here from İstanbul is both quick and enjoyable in its own right, but bear in mind that summer weekends will be jam-packed – in July and August, a couple of sea buses leave Yenikapı weekdays, rising to six at the weekend.

Four of the seven islands are inhabited and can be visited with varying degrees of ease. The largest, **Marmara**, was a colony of Miletus in ancient times, as were Erdek (Artaki) and Kyzikos on the peninsula. A Greek identity persisted until the twentieth century and even now the original names are used by the older generation: Elafonisos for Marmara, Ophioussa for **Avşa**, Haloni for **Paşalimanı**. As elsewhere in western Anatolia, the Greeks began leaving the archipelago at the turn of the twentieth century, with emigration acquiring a more compulsory character after some were caught co-operating with British submarine captains during World War I. Recent years have seen a surge in visits by elderly Greeks born on the islands (or their descendants) searching for their former homes, but the islanders claim they rarely find them – too much has changed.

For such a tightly bunched group, the islands are markedly different: Avşa is the most commercialized (some say ruined); tiny **Ekinlik** and Paşalimanı are the least spoiled; while Marmara falls somewhere in between. Note that if you visit much before June 1 or after September 30, the sea will be cool – and hardly anything open.

## Marmara

Largest of the islands at roughly 17km by 8km, and the closest to İstanbul, **Marmara** acquired its name during the Middle Ages thanks to the giant marble quarries (*ta marmara* in Greek) that are still worked on the north shore. Marmara is the ancient Proconnesus, from where the famous blue-grey streaked **Proconnesian marble** originates, used for many of the columns in the Aya Sofya in İstanbul. Sailing in from the south, you'll see the rocky ridge of seven-hundred-metre **Alyas Dağı**, with a ruined Byzantine tower, plunging down to the island's western tip. Except for its valley-bottom oases, Marmara is bleak – downright windswept and cliff-girt in the north – so most of its villages huddle on the southern, lee shore.

The main town, simply called **MARMARA**, is backed up against a hill, with steep, stepped streets penetrating inland – quite an enchanting setting from a distance. Seen up close, its modern domestic architecture is nothing special, but it's worth seeking out the one or two old wooden houses in the quiet backstreets. The whitewashed mosque, with its stumpy white minaret, has a certain charm, and the attached graveyard, complete with tombstones sporting Ottoman turbans, is interesting. The sandy **beach** is five-minutes' walk to the northwest of Marmara town, but you'll have to accustom yourself to the

extremely low salinity of the Sea of Marmara and the occasional swarms of white jellyfish that plague all the islands from time to time. In cooler weather, you can hike up through the mostly barren **interior**, but there are only goat trails along the ridges, and most of the time you'll be restricted to the skeletal network of dirt roads that rings the island.

The only other village equipped to handle visitors is **ÇİNARLİ**, 6km northwest, or a fifteen-minute *dolmuş* ride along a dirt road from the main harbour in Marmara town. Çinarli is a pretty place, with cottage gardens bursting with flowers and a village green shaded by plane trees (*çınar*) after which the village takes its name, but its seven-hundred-metre swathe of sand and pebbles is backed by a scruffy esplanade and is not particularly private. There's no permanent accommodation in Çinarli, but Turkish families have been known to rent out a few *pansiyon* rooms in busier years, and there are a couple of summer-only fish and kebab restaurants on the front.

From Marmara, tracks lead several kilometres to the eastern side of the island, which has been quarried for centuries. The marble is still cut today into mammoth blocks and transported to the harbour at **Saraylar**, a village in the north of the island populated by migrant quarry-workers from the Black Sea coast. The sole attempt to attract tourists here is a haphazard collection of marble fragments collected together in what is referred to as an "open-air museum", though it's little more than a dumping ground for old rocks.

### Practicalities

**Ferries** dock at the terminal in the centre of Marmara town, from where it's a five-minute walk to the **PTT**, **bank** and a number of small hotels and *pansiyon*s. The best **accommodation** is at the far west end of the shore esplanade, facing the sunset. The *Marmara Hotel* (☎0266/885 6140; 60TL) is the top budget option, offering sparse but clean, gleaming white rooms with small balconies – the only drawback is that the walls of the tiny en-suite bathrooms finish well short of the ceiling. The *Şato Motel* a little further along the front (☎0266/885 5003; doubles 70TL) has sea-view terraces and a good breakfast, but the rooms are looking tired and it suffers from noise from the nearby *gazinos*. The brash new *Sunlight* back in the centre of the village behind the mosque (☎0266/885 5495, ⓦwww.sunlightotel.com; 100TL) has big, nicely decorated rooms, flat-screen TVs, air-conditioning and a mini-bar, and is, perhaps, a sign that the nature of the island is about to change.

The **restaurants** in town are unpretentious. The *Birol*, the first establishment over the footbridge from the jetty, right on the waterfront, has excellent fish, meat and *meze*s, including some unusual dishes (fried aubergine slices topped with grilled, herby cheese) and well-done standards (the shrimp *guveç* is particularly tasty); expect to pay around 25TL per head for a full meal. Right behind it is the *Baba Zula şarap evi* (wine house), named after oriental dub merchants Baba Zula (see p.336), who are friends of the proprietor and who used to drink here. It's tricked out in neo-hippy decor and uses eighty-year-old fish barrels (it was the old fish saltery) as tables and stools. Also on the front near the jetty is the *Birsen*, which provides tasty soups and stews – hardly fitting meals for a hot summer's evening, but cheap and filling at 7TL for a main course.

## Avşa

Low-lying and partly covered in vineyards, **Avşa** – around 8km in length and 4km wide – is surrounded by beaches and crystal-clear water that are both its *raison d'être* and its curse. The island is heavily developed and virtually a suburb

of İstanbul in season, with prime beachfront locations snapped up long ago as holiday homes. The sole cultural point of interest is the abandoned **Aya Triada church**, awash somewhere in the concrete sprawl that is the main town of **TÜRKELI** – an unruly spread of apartment buildings along the west coast. A promenade dominates the front with its row of cavernous cafés, where families drink tea and play games in the evening.

Taxis and *dolmuşes* from Türkeli (from next to Hal Çarsısı on Okullar Caddesi) run the 2.5km to **YIĞITLER** on the east coast of Avşa, populated almost entirely by settlers from the former Yugoslavia. One kilometre southeast of the village, there's a large sandy beach called **Altınkum**, overlooked by a couple of summer-only restaurants. For more secluded **swimming**, the only option is to head off by foot to the quieter coves to the south of here.

### Practicalities

**Ferries** dock at the terminal roughly halfway along the Avşa urban strip, from where small private boats also cross to Paşalimanı – prices and frequency depending entirely on demand. The **PTT** is located to the north of town on Posthane Caddesi, the road running uphill parallel to the beach.

Although there's loads of **accommodation**, most fills quickly during high season and tends to be in the form of unremarkable, basic *pansiyon* rooms, often with shared bathrooms, on the spare floors of people's holiday homes. A couple of exceptions include the *Geçim Pansiyon*, 500m north of the Türkeli ferry terminal (Ⓣ0266/896 1493, Ⓦwww.gecimpansiyon.com; 80TL, breakfast and dinner extra and on request), with a wide choice of compact rooms, from singles to family-sized, fully equipped apartments, and the friendly, family-run *Yalı Pansiyon*, immediately south of the jetty on the beachfront (Ⓣ0266/896 2085; 60TL), with twelve waterless rooms but plenty of hot water in the communal bathroom and nice views out to sea.

**Restaurants** also abound, though only the *Yarar* – also south of the jetty on the beachfront – particularly stands out, a popular and established diner that opens most of the year, serving seafood and meat dishes from 10TL. Strangely, despite the island's vineyards, most of the wine on sale seems to come from Bozcaada.

## Ekinlik and Paşalimanı

There is little to see or do – never mind anywhere to stay or eat – on Ekinlik and Paşalimanı, but if you're determined to go, you can take at least one daily private ferry from Erdek in summer for each of these other two inhabited Marmara islands. **Ekinlik**, also known as Kaşık Adası, or "Spoon Island", because of its shape, is little more than 1km in length and 500m across. Although there are no beaches, and consequently no tourism development here, the island has a pretty harbourside village, featuring several old Greek houses and a ruined church to the left of the jetty. The harbour is full of fishing boats (no pleasure craft, for a change) and is overlooked by a shaded tea garden.

Also lacking enough beaches to make it the target of development, **Paşalimanı** – irregularly shaped but almost 10km in length – is a sleepy, friendly place, greener than Marmara and Avşa and distinguished mainly by its giant plane trees. There's little to attract anyone to **BALİKLİ**, the "capital", though a few people rent out their spare rooms over summer, and occasional day-trippers visit on private boats to drink tea on the jetty before returning to Avşa.

19

# İznik and Termal

The laidback lakeside retreat of **İznik**, set in a beautiful rural setting of rich agricultural land and forested hills, is easily reached by high-speed ferry across the Sea of Marmara, followed by an hour's bus ride southeast. Known as Nicaea in ancient times, it once played a key role in the development of Christianity and is still encircled by impressive city walls. Long on history and short on crowds, it makes a great introduction to rural Turkey.

Even closer to İstanbul lies the delightful thermal-spa resort aptly known as **Termal**, oozing *fin-de-siècle* charm amidst the lush, wooded hills surrounding it.



## İznik

It's hard to believe that **İZNIK**, a somnolent farming community at the east end of the lake of the same name, was once the seat of empires and scene of desperate battles. But looking around the fertile olive-mantled valley, you can understand its attraction for imperial powers needing a fortified base near the sea-lanes of the Marmara. Today, İznik is a backwater, slumbering away among its orchards and waking only recently to the demands of tourism. The town's famous sixteenth-century ceramics, the best ever produced in Turkey, are now all but absent from İznik's museums and mosques – even the tiles sheathing the minaret of Yeşil Camii, the town's most famous landmark, are poor substitutes made in Kütahya. It's possible to visit İznik as a long day-trip from İstanbul and have sufficient time to sample its monuments – and some people do – but you'd be rushed and would end up seeing the sites (in summer at least) in the heat and glare of the midday sun. Worse, you'd have no time to absorb the atmosphere of this out-of-the-way place, which is as far removed from the big city as you can imagine. The lake itself, backed by low, wooded mountains, is quite beautiful, with reed-fringed shores and snow-white egrets fishing in the shallows.

### Some history

Founded by Alexander the Great's general Antigonus in 316 BC, the city was seized and enlarged fifteen years later by his rival Lysimachus, who named it **Nicaea** after his late wife. He also gave Nicaea its first set of walls and the grid plan typical of Hellenistic towns; both are still evident. When the Bithynian kingdom succeeded Lysimachus, Nicaea alternated with nearby Nicomedia (modern İzmit) as its capital until bequeathed to Rome in 74 BC. Under the

Roman emperors, the city prospered as capital of the province, and it continued to flourish during the Byzantine era.

Nicaea played a pivotal role in early Christianity, by virtue of hosting two important **ecumenical councils**. The first, convened by Constantine the Great in 325 AD, resulted in the condemnation of the Arian heresy (see box opposite). The seventh council (the second to be held here) was presided over by Empress Irene in 787 AD; this time, the Iconoclast controversy was settled by the pronouncement, widely misunderstood in the West, that icons had their proper place in the church so long as they were revered and not worshipped.

Nicaea's much-repaired walls seldom repelled invaders, and in 1081 the Selçuks took the city, only to be evicted by a combined force of Byzantines and Crusaders sixteen years later. The fall of Constantinople to the Fourth Crusade in 1204 propelled Nicaea into the spotlight once more, for the Byzantine heir Theodore Lascaris retreated here and made this the base of the improbably successful **Nicaean Empire**. The Lascarid dynasty added a second circuit of walls before returning to Constantinople in 1261, but these again failed to deter the besieging Ottomans, who, led by Orhan Gazi, the victor of Bursa, broke through in March 1331.

### The first Council of Nicaea – a defining moment in Christianity

In 325 AD, when Christianity was still very much in its infancy, the Emperor Constantine invited bishops from all over the empire to his lakeside palace in Nicaea to discuss the hot topic of the day – the **nature of Christ**. Was he, as the followers of the presbyter Arius of Alexandria were claiming, of "like nature" but basically made of lesser stuff than God? Or was he, as a majority of believers thought, divine? This was not just some arcane theological question; it was a controversy threatening the very fabric of the empire. Across the near east, rabble-rousing rival bishops were spouting forth their rhetoric, their followers scrawling pro or anti-Arian graffiti on city walls and inflamed mobs of both persuasions were rioting in the streets.

At Nicaea, Constantine managed to persuade a majority of the bishops present to vote for his compromise solution, which was that God and Christ were "consubstantial" (ie made of the same substance). Christ (the Son) was now officially accepted as divine and a co-equal part of the Holy Trinity, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit. The **Nicaean Creed**, as it became known, is still central to Christian belief today.

Renamed İznik, the city embarked on a golden age of sorts, interrupted briefly by the pillaging of Tamerlane in 1402. Virtually all of the surviving monuments predate the Mongol sacking, but the most enduring contribution to art and architecture – the celebrated **İznik tiles and pottery** – first appeared during the reign of Çelebi Mehmet I, who brought skilled potters from Persia to begin the local industry. This received another boost in 1514 when Selim the Grim took Tabriz and sent more craftsmen west as war booty; by the end of the sixteenth century, ceramic production was at its height, with more than three hundred functioning kilns. It was to be a brief flowering, since within another hundred years war and politics had scattered most of the artisans. By the mid-eighteenth century, the local industry had packed up completely, with products from nearby Kütahya serving as inferior substitutes. İznik began a long, steady decline, hastened by near-total devastation during the War of Independence.

## Arrival and information

The best way to İznik from İstanbul is to take the **fast ferry** or **sea bus** from Yenikapı to Yalova (1hr 10min; 12TL), where regular mini- and midi-buses run to İznik (1hr; 7TL). There's one daily **bus** to İstanbul, leaving the *otogar* (bus station) in the southeast quadrant at 7.45am. If you're heading onto Bursa, buses run between 6.30am and 9pm. The town's tourist **office** is on Atatürk Caddesi, just north of the Aya Sofya, but was still being constructed at the time of writing. There's an **internet café** next door to the *Kaynarca Pansiyon* on Gündem Sok. Both men and women can get steam-cleaned at the **İkinci Murat Hamamı** (daily: women 8am–2pm, men 4–10pm; 12TL) just southeast of İznik's central roundabout and the Aya Sofya Museum.

## Accommodation

**Rooms**, singles in particular, are at a premium in İznik and reservations are recommended between mid-June and mid-September – especially at the weekends, when inhabitants of neighbouring towns come to bathe in İznik lake.

**Çamlık Motel** Sahili Cad 11 ⓣ&ⓕ0224/757 1631. This spotless, well-run hotel has small but comfortable rooms with balconies overlooking the lake, and is surrounded on three sides by olive groves and mulberry trees; there's also an excellent attached restaurant. 90TL

**Hotel Safira** Gøl Sahil Yolu ⓣ0224/757 1700, ⓔinfo@izniksafira.com. Flashy new addition to the lakeside hotels, boasting big, a/c rooms with flat-screen TVs. There's a pool out front, though it's not very well screened from promenaders on the lakeside drag. 135TL

**İznik Vakfı Konukevi** Sahil Yolu Sok 13 ⓣ0224/757 6025, ⓔinfo@iznik.com. The guesthouse of the foundation dedicated to reviving the town's tile-making heritage (see opposite) is, as you might expect, adorned with all manner of colourful, intricate wall decorations. The good-value rooms are gleaming white and both very tasteful and comfortable – plus there's a lovely shady garden. Be warned, though, it fills up with groups of resident artists and students in the summer, so booking well in advance is essential. 70TL

**Kaynarca Pansiyon** Gündem Sok 1 ⓣ0224/757 1753, ⓦwww.kaynarca.s5.com. The most appealing midtown budget option, run by English-speaking Ali and his charming family. Dorm beds (14TL), as well as en-suite singles, doubles (50TL) and triples – all rooms have satellite TV, though there's neither a/c nor fans. Breakfast (5TL) is served on the rooftop terrace, and there's a kitchen for guests' use.

## The Town

With its regular street plan, İznik is easy to navigate. The main north–south boulevard **Atatürk Caddesi** and its east–west counterpart **Kılıçaslan Caddesi** link four of the seven ancient gates, dividing the town into unequal quadrants. Only enthusiasts will want to walk the entire perimeter of the double **walls**, now missing most of their hundred original watchtowers, but three of the seven portals are worth some time. Heavy traffic has been rerouted through modern breaches in the fortifications to prevent vibration damage to the original openings, now restricted to tractors and pedestrians.

The **lake** is swimmable in summer, but the town beaches are scrappy, and weed, algae and litter can foul the lake edges; you really need a car to reach the more attractive spots. Both roads out of town along the lakeshore stay close to the water and offer swimming possibilities at various tiny beaches along the way.

### The southeast quadrant

A good starting point is İznik's central roundabout, southeast of which is the **Aya Sofya Müzesi**, housed in all that remains of the Byzantine Church of Holy Wisdom, founded by Justinian (Aya Sofya Museum: Tues–Sun 8.30am–noon & 1–5pm; 2TL). The church/museum was undergoing restoration at the time of writing, but is set to re-open in 2009. You can still stroll around the pleasant gardens in which it's set, full of white and pink blooming oleander, and admire its exterior. The current structure was built after an earthquake in 1065, and as the cathedral of the provisional Byzantine capital, hosted the coronations of the four Nicaean emperors. The Ottomans converted it to a mosque directly on taking the city and Mimar Sinan restored it, but the premises were already half-ruined when reduced to their present, sorry condition following the War of Independence. Inside, there's not much to see except some damaged floor mosaics and a faint but exquisite **fresco** of Christ, John and Mary, at ground level behind a glass panel to the left as you enter.

Back on Kılıçaslan Caddesi, opposite the İkinci Murat Hamamı, you'll see the excavations of the İznik **kilns**, still in progress. The site can be entered at any time, with the kilns clearly visible; finds from the excavations are on display in the archeological museum (see p.68).

Three blocks east of the kilns stands the **Süleyman Paşa Medresesi**, built in 1332 – the oldest such Ottoman structure in Turkey and the first example of a school with an open courtyard surrounded by eleven chambers and nineteen

domes. Three blocks south of the *medresesi* is the fourteenth-century Yakub Çelebi Zaviyesi, founded by the luckless prince slain by his brother Beyazit I at Kosovo in 1389. A block to the east, nothing but foundations remain of the Kimisis Kilisesi (Church of the Assumption), the presumed burial place of Theodore Lascaris, which was destroyed in 1922.

## İznik Vakfı

The **İznik Vakfı**, or İznik Foundation, clearly signposted in the southwest quadrant on Halı Saha Arkası (daily Sept–June 8am–6pm; July & Aug 6–11am; ⓣ0224/757 6025, ⓦwww.iznik.com), was established in 1995 with the dual intentions of researching the early techniques used to produce İznik tiles and restarting production using traditional methods. Today, tiles of extremely high quality are manufactured and sold on site (prices start from 255TL each, credit cards accepted); exact replicas of original designs are not reproduced for fear of them being passed off as genuine. During a visit, you'll see different production stages and receive a brief history of the İznik *œuvre*. Occasional workshops are run on request for interested groups, with accommodation in the small hotel on site (see opposite).

İznik tiles adorn various Turkish company headquarters, while in İstanbul you can see them decorating the stations on the metro line from Taksim to Levant and in the newly refurbished Tünel, as well as in the Turkish bath of the *Ritz-Carlton Hotel* and at the new terminal buildings of Atatürk International airport. They are also on display in the Montréal Peace Park in Canada.

## The northeast quadrant

Just north of Kılıçaslan Caddesi squats the **Hacı Özbek Camii**, the earliest known Ottoman mosque, built in 1333 but much adulterated; the portico was senselessly pulled down in 1939, but is presently being restored by the Ministry of Culture. Further along the road you'll soon reach a vast landscaped park to the north, dotted with İznik's most famous monuments. The **Yeşil Camii**, or Green Mosque, erected toward the end of the fourteenth century, is a small gem of a building, its highlight the fantastic marble relief on the portico. Tufted with a stubby minaret that harks back to Selçuk models, the mosque takes its name from the green İznik tiles that once adorned its minaret; they've long since been replaced by mediocre, tri-coloured Kütahya work.

Across the park sprawls the **Nilüfer Hatun İmareti**, commissioned by Murat I in 1388 in honour of his mother, by all accounts a remarkable woman. Daughter of a Byzantine noble (some say of Emperor John VI Cantacuzenos himself), Nilüfer Hatun was married off to Orhan Gazi to consolidate a Byzantine–Ottoman alliance. Her ability was soon recognized by Orhan, who appointed her regent during his frequent absences. The T-form building, whose ample domes perennially play host to storks, is more accurately called a *zaviye* than a mere soup kitchen and is one of the few that never doubled as a mosque. It was originally the meeting place not of dervishes but of the Ahi brotherhood, a guild drawn from the ranks of skilled craftsmen that also acted as a community welfare and benevolent society.

Today, the *imaret* contains the **İznik Museum** (Tues–Sun 9am–noon & 1.30–5pm; 2TL), which is sadly lacking in the expected İznik ware. The pieces of fourteenth-century İznik tiles excavated from the town's kilns have been painstakingly restored, but they are all incomplete and there are few of the beautiful sixteenth-century mosque ornaments and massive plates that are commonplace in the museums of İstanbul and abroad. More interesting is an

exhibition of **Selçuk tile fragments** found in the area around the Roman theatre and in local kilns – this area was not known to be a centre of Selçuk occupation and it's uncertain whether these tiles were locally produced or imported, although evidence suggests that İznik ware is in part descended from that of the Selçuks. The museum has a good selection of finds, dating back to 6000 BC, from excavations at a nearby *hüyuk* (settlement mound) called Ilıpınar – including pottery, bone tools and a fine Bronze Age clay burial sarcophagus. There are plenty of Roman-era relics on display, including a bronze dancing Pan, some Byzantine gold jewellery and, standing out among the nondescript marble clutter, a sarcophagus in near-mint condition. The garden area is full of sarcophagi, stelae, giant pithoi and Ottoman headstones complete with turbans or fezzes, and there's even an Armenian gravestone leant against the back wall of the *imaret*. For a more perilous adventure, and a fine view of Nilüfer Hatun's cupolas, climb the minaret of the adjacent **Şeyh Kubettin Camii**.

## The walls and beyond

The closest gate to the Yeşil Camii is the eastern **Lefke Kapısı**, a three-ply affair including a triumphal arch dedicated to Hadrian between the two courses of walls. Just outside is a stretch of the ancient **aqueduct** that until recently supplied the town. It's possible to get up on the ramparts here for a stroll, as it is at the northerly **İstanbul Kapısı**, best preserved of the gates, the outer part of which was constructed as a triumphal triple arch to celebrate the visit of the Roman Emperor Hadrian in 124. The inner gate is decorated by two stone-carved **masks**, probably taken from the nearby Roman theatre. The wall area to the east of this gate is packed with small workshops manufacturing wooden crates for the local fruit industry. Other traces of Roman Nicaea are evident in the southwestern quarter: a course of **ancient wall** delimits the so-called Senatus Court, extending from the surviving tower next to the **Saray Kapısı**. The **theatre** lies just inside this gate, and has lost most of its seating, but if you scramble about you'll find a slab carved with a round shield and sword –

▲ İznik city walls

a gladiator symbol. The area between the town and the lake is a mass of orchards, with figs, apple, medlar, walnut and mulberry growing in profusion, along with cypress, linden and plane trees.

If time permits, you might head to the **Abdülvahap hill**, 2.5km east of the Lefke Kapısı, for a comprehensive view over İznik, its walls, the surrounding olive groves and lake. From mid-March to mid-September, when the sun sets between the two distant hills on either side of the lake, the top of this hill is the best place to share a dramatic sunset with picnicking İznik families. The green-painted tomb up here belongs to a certain Abdülvahap, a semi-legendary character in the Arab raids of the eighth century.

Seven kilometres north of İznik, in the village of **Elbeyli**, is the **Yeraltı Mezar**, a subterranean tomb for which the archeological museum staff in İznik retain the keys. Thought to be the fourth-century burial chamber of a Roman couple (there are two graves here), the single chamber is covered in excellent frescoes, including a pair of peacocks. For a small consideration, the museum custodian takes individuals and groups after the museum closes at 5pm. You'll need your own transport, or the willpower to haggle with a taxi driver, for a return trip.

## Eating and drinking

Most visitors will want to eat **by the lakeshore**, where some of the restaurants are licensed; try grilled or fried *yayın*, the excellent local catfish. For snacks or dessert, there are plenty of tea gardens, cafés and ice-cream parlours overlooking the lake. The town centre has a number of decent places for an (unlicensed) meal.

**Balıkçi Sahili Cad 22.** Good-value licensed restaurant, with lakeside views and outside tables. Simple grilled or fried fish accompanied by bread and salad costs around 15TL.

**Çamlık Motel Sahili Cad 11.** The nicest of the waterside restaurants in a lovely shady setting, dishing up *meze*s and kebabs, including their speciality fish kebab, for around 20TL a head with beer.

**Karadeniz Pide Salon Kılıçaslan Cad.** Fresh and cheap *pides* washed down with *ayran* – you can watch the food being pulled into shape in the kitchen at the back of this tiny cafeteria.

**Kar-pi Kılıçaslan Cad.** A small a/c place with a few tables set out front, the *Kar-pi* dishes up delicious *pide* for 5TL (try the local speciality *İznik pide* with cheese, olives and tomatoes on top) and a variety of kebabs for a little more.

**Köfteci Yusuf İznik Lisesi Karşısı.** Smart new glass palace of a place, with friendly black-and-orange-suited waiters, dishing up *köfte* as delicious as anywhere in the country. The large portions come accompanied by a spicy tomato dip and grilled pepper and tomato – all for 4TL. They do a range of kebabs and other grills as well.

# Termal

The famous hot springs at **TERMAL** are set in pleasantly forested hills 12km to the southwest of the scruffy southern port town of Yalova. Taking the waters in the *fin-de-siècle* splendour of one of the bath-houses built around these springs, perhaps after a stroll along some of the forest trails around them, is a real wind-down after the hectic pace of life in İstanbul. Although visited by Byzantine and Roman emperors, Termal's springs only became fashionable again at the turn of the twentieth century, and most of the Ottoman buildings date from that era.

Atatürk had a house built here, now open as a **Atatürk Müzesi** (museum: Tues–Sun 8.30am–noon & 1–5pm; 2TL). Designed in the modernist style by one of the leading architects of the new Republic, Sedad Hakki Eldem, it was built in 1929 and took a mere 38 days to complete – in time to host the visiting Shah of Iran. The house is still furnished pretty much as it was in Atatürk's day and gives a real insight into the man and his times. The bedroom of his adopted daughter and the nation's first female pilot, Sabiha Gökçen, is kitted-out with typically curvaceous Art Deco furniture, whilst the RCA radio that the great man sat glued to night after night is on display, as is a German-made piano and a sideboard hand-carved by a reminder of the pre-Republican era, Sultan Abdul Hamit. Atatürk visited the house each summer until his death in 1938.

The biggest single draw in Termal, though, is the outdoor pool of the Art Nouveau **Kurşunlu Hamamı** (daily 8am–11pm; 15TL), with its swirling roof and bits of Roman relief carving set into the walls. Here you can wallow in the hot waters and admire the architecture and sun-dappled forest canopy around you. Water temperatures reach 65 degrees celsius, so the best time to visit is in winter, when the hot water provides a haven from the seasonal chill. In summer, you'll find yourself jumping out to sunbathe in order to cool off. Several **hamams** – popular for their beneficial effect on rheumatism and skin diseases – offer communal pools (daily 8am–11pm) with separate compartments for tour groups. It's 13TL for the Kurşunlu Hamamı, 6.5TL for the nearby but smaller Valide Sultan Banyo; a massage at either will set you back 20TL.

The spa resort is completely dominated by two luxury **hotels**, both owned by the Yalova Termal Kapıcıları hotel group: the *Çinar* and the *Çamlık* (reservations for both ⓣ0226/675 7400, ⓦwww.yalovatermal.com; doubles from 120TL), whose rooms vary in price according to size, facilities and location. A cheaper alternative can be found nearby in an idyllic location in the village of **Üvezpnar**, on one of the surrounding hills: the *Dinana* (ⓣ0226/675 7668, ⓕ675 7293; doubles 60TL) is family-run and clean, with twenty pleasant rooms all with balconies overlooking the forested mountains, and a restaurant serving simple meals. Üvezpınar is a two-kilometre hike up the road leading from the *jandarma* (rural police) station to the left of the entrance to Termal, or up steps leading from within the resort itself, though several of the *dolmuşes* from Yalova run right up to the village.

## Practicalities

Take the **fast ferry** or **sea bus** (12TL) from İstanbul's Yenikapı terminal – or from İznik, the bus – to Yalova, from where there are frequent *dolmuşes* from the bus station (adjacent to the ferry terminal) for the half-hour run up to Termal (2.5TL). Don't make the mistake of getting off in the town of Termal, with its rash of pensions, hotels and basic eateries; instead, continue onto **Kapıcılar**, where the major baths are located.

20

# Bursa and Uludağ

As the crow flies, the historic and beautifully situated city of **Bursa** is less than a hundred kilometres from İstanbul. It's a good city for walking around – particularly following the recent re-laying of many of the city-centre pavements – whether through the hive of bazaars, the linear parks of the Hisar district or the anachronistic peace of the Muradiye quarter. Snow-addicts may be more interested in the resort of **Uludağ**, perched high above the city, Turkey's longest-established ski resort.

It's possible to take in Bursa in an extremely long day from İstanbul, but to make the most of it you should spend at least one night here, more if you want to ski on Uludağ, or do some walking in the warmer months.

## Bursa

Draped ribbon-like along the leafy lower slopes of Mount Uludağ (Great Mountain), which towers more than 2000m above it, overlooking the fertile plain of the Nilüfer Çayı, **BURSA** does more justice to its setting than any other Turkish city apart from İstanbul. It was the first capital of the mighty Ottoman Empire and contains some of the finest early Ottoman monuments in the Balkans, set within neighbourhoods that, despite being marooned in masses of concrete, are amongst the most appealing in Turkey.

Industrialization over the last four decades and the rise in population to over 1.5 million people mean that the city has lost some of its former elegance. Silk and textile manufacture, plus patronage of the area's thermal baths by the elite, were for centuries the most important enterprises; they're now outstripped by automobile manufacture, canneries and bottlers processing the rich harvest of the plain, and the presence of Uludağ University. Following the upheavals of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Bursa was flooded with immigrants from former Balkan possessions of the Ottoman Empire. The vast numbers of more recent migrants, however, attracted by job opportunities at the various factories, hail from rural, poverty-stricken eastern Anatolia. Students provide a necessary leavening in what might otherwise be a uniformly conservative community. Some of this atmosphere derives from Bursa's role as first capital of the Ottoman Empire and burial place of the first six sultans, their piety as well as authority emanating from the mosques, social-welfare foundations and tombs built at their command.

Relatively few Westerners visit Bursa, but Arabs, attracted by its Islamic sights and the bath-houses clustered round the hot springs, come here in their droves.

### Some history

Although the area had been settled at least a millennium previously, the first city here was founded early in the second century BC by Prusias I, a king of ancient Bithynia, who in typical Hellenistic fashion named the town **Proussa**, after himself. Legend claims that Hannibal helped him pick the location of the acropolis, today's Hisar.

Overshadowed by nearby Nicomedia (modern İzmit) and Nicaea (İznik), the city stagnated until the **Romans**, attracted by its natural hot springs, began spending lavish amounts on public baths and made it capital of their province of Mysia. Justinian introduced silkworm culture, and Byzantine Proussa flourished until Arab raids of the seventh and eighth centuries, and the subsequent tug of war for sovereignty between the Selçuks and the Greeks, precipitated decline. During and after the Latin interlude in Constantinople (1204–61), the Byzantines reconsolidated their hold on Proussa, but not for long.

The start of the fourteenth century saw a small band of nomadic Turks, led by one **Osman Gazi**, camped outside the walls of Proussa. After more than a decade of siege, the city capitulated in 1326 to Osman's son, Orhan, and the **Ottomans** ceased to be a wandering tribe of marauders. Orhan marked the acquisition of a capital and the organization of an infant state by styling himself sultan, giving the city its present name and striking coinage. Bursa began to enjoy a second golden age: the silk industry was expanded and the city, now outgrowing the confines of the citadel, graced with monuments.

In the years following Orhan's death in 1362, the imperial capital was gradually moved to Edirne, but Bursa's place in history, and in the hearts of the Ottomans, was ensured; succeeding sultans continued to add buildings, and to be laid to rest here, for another hundred years. Disastrous fires and earthquakes in the mid-nineteenth century, and the War of Independence, only slightly diminished the city's splendour.

## Arrival and information

The best way to get to Bursa from İstanbul is either by **bus** or a combination of **bus and ferry**. Regular buses (20TL) depart from İstanbul's Harem and Esenler stations, taking at least three hours from Harem, four or more from Esenler, depending on traffic. The high-speed **sea bus** takes a little over an hour (12TL) from Yenikapı ferry terminal to Yalova, from where buses and *dolmuşes* (8TL) run to Bursa (around 50min). Either way, you'll arrive at Bursa's bus station, 10km north of town on the Yalova road. To get to the city centre, take a #38 bus, buying a ticket (2TL) from the kiosk before boarding. Alternatively, catch one of the (less frequent) crossings from Yenikapı to Güzelyalı and then a bus or *dolmuş* to the start of Bursa's **metro system**, at Organize Sanayı (around 30min). Travel to the Şehreküstü stop, from where it's a fifteen-minute walk south to the city centre (Heykel).

Bursa's position at the foot of the mountain has dictated an elongated layout, with most of the major boulevards running from east to west, changing their names several times as they go. Bursa's main **tourist office** (Mon–Fri 8am–noon & 1–5pm; ⓣ0224/220 1848) is a 200m walk from Heykel, in Koza Parkı, opposite Orhan Gazi Camii, in a row of shops under the north side of Atatürk Caddesi, where you can pick up a reasonable city map.

## City transport

Though Bursa is narrow, with many points of interest bunched together, it's sufficiently long enough for you to want to consider **public transport** to reach

the outlying attractions. Of the **city buses**, only the #2/A (connecting Emir Sultan in the east of town with Çekirge to the west) and the #3/A (linking Heykel with the Uludağ *teleferik*) are of much use, and you need to buy tickets for them at designated booths. It's often simpler to use Bursa's **dolmuşes** instead (fares are set at 1.4TL); appearing in various colours, they all bear destination signs on their roofs, start from fixed points around the city, and pick up and let down passengers at places clearly marked with a large "D". The new and extensive **metro system**, which runs daily from 6am to midnight, is not as useful for visitors as it could be, as it doesn't connect the major points of interest, but is handy for travelling to and from the ferry terminal at Güzelyalı.

## Accommodation

Reasonably priced **hotel** beds are generally plentiful in Bursa – it's a little off the backpackers' trail and is often treated as a day-trip destination from İstanbul. Rich foreigners, particularly Arabs, gravitate toward the luxury spa-hotels in the western suburb of **Çekirge**, 4km out of the centre, but there's also a cluster of modest establishments out here, around the Birinci Murat Camii. If you're interested in seeing monumental Bursa, then staying in midtown accommodation, around **Atatürk Caddesi**, makes more sense.

### Central Bursa

**Efehan Hotel** **Gümüşçeken Cad 34 ⓣ0224/225 2260, ⓦwww.efehan.com.tr.** Pleasant, three-star comfort in an old-looking but modern, centrally located hotel. Extras include mini-bar and satellite TV. Ask for one of the top rooms for mountain views. 110TL

**Guneş Hotel** **İnebey Cad 75 ⓣ0224/224 1404, ⓔotelgunes@yahoo.com.** Cheap, clean and friendly, in a much-restored old house with centrally heated (though waterless) rooms, this is the backpackers' choice in Bursa and is often full with Korean and Japanese travellers. 46TL

**Hotel Çeşmeli** **Gümüşçeken Cad 6 ⓣ&ⓕ0224/224 1511.** Named after the *çeşme* (fountain) incorporated into the wall to the right of the front door, this immaculate, extremely welcoming hotel is run entirely by women. Rooms have mini-bars, TVs and fans; and a decent buffet breakfast is included – a real home from home in a foreign city-centre, and good value. 90TL

**Hotel İpekçi** **Çancılar Cad 38 ⓣ0224/221 1935, ⓕ221 4124.** In the bazaar area west of İnönü Cad, with bright, airy and surprisingly quiet rooms. En-suite rooms are more expensive. 60TL

**Kent Hotel** **Atatürk Cad 69 ⓣ0224/223 5420, ⓦwww.kentotel.com.** The town centre's most prominent hotel offers a high level of comfort – large rooms with satellite TV and mini-bars – but with a packed *McDonalds* below it and the busy main street right in front, you'll probably want to keep the windows closed and the a/c on. Ten percent discount for booking online. 155TL

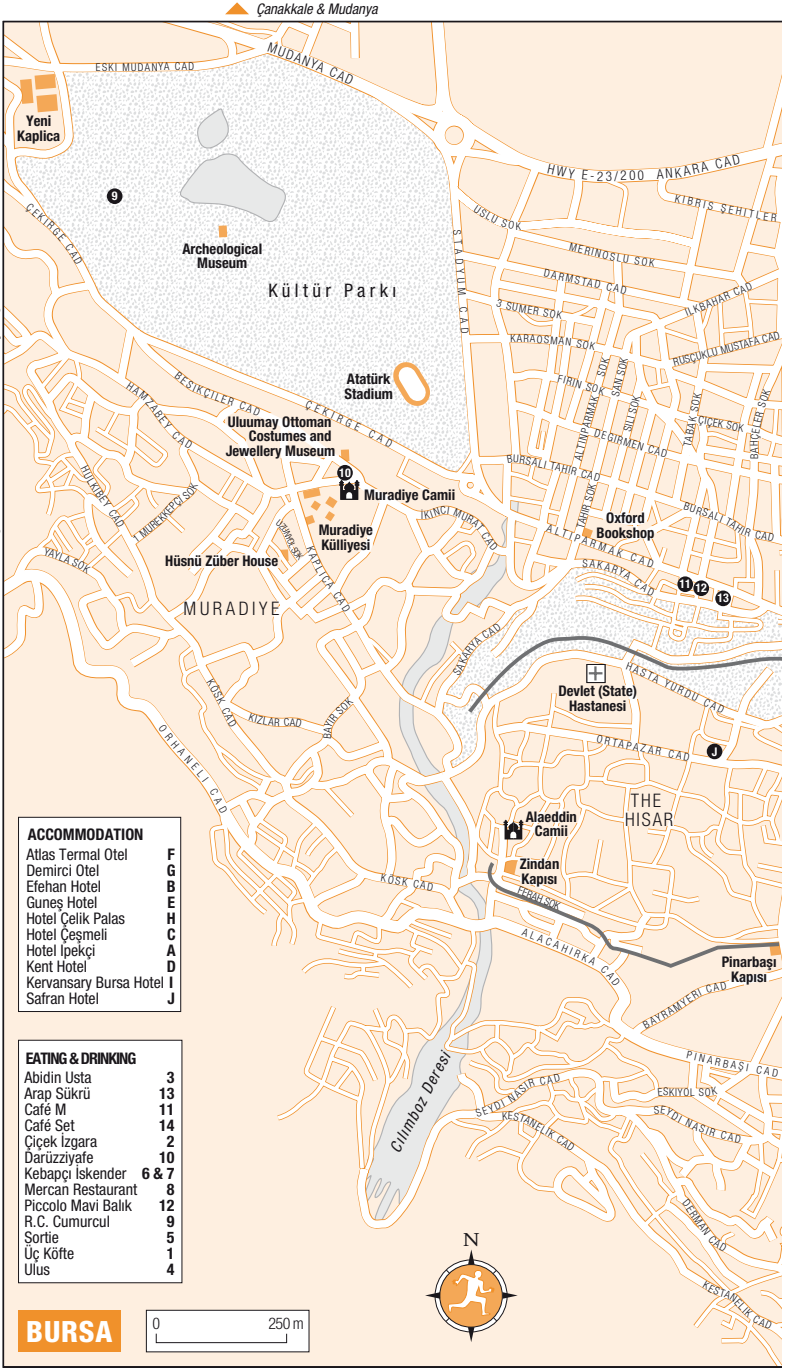
**Safran Hotel** **Arka Sok 4, off Ortapazar Cad ⓣ0224/224 7216, ⓔsafran_otel@yahoo.com.** Beautifully restored wooden house, in the old part of town up on the Hisar. Its nine rooms are modern, with a/c, mini-bar and TV, and are extremely comfortable. If you want a boutique hotel in a quiet, atmospheric location, this is the place. 140TL

### Çekirge

**Atlas Termal Otel** **Hamamlar Cad 35 ⓣ0224/234 4100, ⓦwww.atlasotel.com.** The full thermal experience for a fraction of the usual price. The *Atlas* has two shiny marble *hamams* set in a mock Art Nouveau interior, as well as a reasonable restaurant, garden courtyard and terrace. The bedrooms are comfortable and boast excellent bathrooms. Ageing but very good value. 90TL

**Demirci Otel** **Hamamlar Cad 33 ⓣ0224/236 5104, ⓕ235 2436.** Friendly, unpretentious and good value en-suite rooms (prices include breakfast). There's a searingly hot *hamam* in the basement. 96TL

**Hotel Çelik Palas** **Çekirge Cad 79 ⓣ0224/233 3800, ⓦwww.bursa.swissotel.com.** The elegance of the hotel's interior – all chandeliers and marble – is slightly let down by its location, right on a busy main road. The bedrooms all come with a/c, cable TV and hot spring water in the bathtubs, and there's a very good




**ACCOMMODATION**

| | |
|---|---|
| Atlas Termal Otel | F |
| Demirci Otel | G |
| Efehan Hotel | B |
| Guneş Hotel | E |
| Hotel Çelik Palas | H |
| Hotel Çeşmeli | C |
| Hotel Ipekçi | A |
| Kent Hotel | D |
| Kervansary Bursa Hotel | I |
| Safran Hotel | J |

**EATING & DRINKING**

| | |
|---|---|
| Abidin Usta | 3 |
| Arap Sükrü | 13 |
| Café M | 11 |
| Café Set | 14 |
| Çiçek Izgara | 2 |
| Darüzziyafe | 10 |
| Kebapçi Iskender | 6 & 7 |
| Mercan Restaurant | 8 |
| Piccolo Mavi Balik | 12 |
| R.C. Cumurcul | 9 |
| Sortie | 5 |
| Üç Köfte | 1 |
| Ulus | 4 |

**BURSA**

Bus Station & Yalova
Ankara & Cumalıkızık
Yıldırım Beyazıt Camii
Emir Sultan Camii
Teleferik for Uludağ
0
100 m
Zafer Plaza Shopping Mall
İvaz Paşa Çarşısı
Kuyumcular Çarşısı
Covered Bazaar
Koza Hanı
Emir Bey Hanı
Ulu Cami
Koza Parkı
Orhan Gazi Camii
Town Hall
Kültür Merkezi
Hanamelsanatlar Sok
Demirciler Çarşişi
Dolmuşes to Çekirge
Dolmuşes to Cumalikizik
Buses to Teleferik
Dolmuşes to Teleferik
Atatürk Statue & Cumhüriyet Alanı
Dolmuşes to Teleferik, Muradiye & Emir Sultan
Gök Dere
Police
Osman & Orhan Gazi Türbesi
TOPHANE
Dolmuşes to Uludağ
Çakir Ağa Hamami
See inset map above
HEYKEL
EMIR SULTAN
Yeşil Camii
Yeşil Türbe
Museum of Turkish & Islamic Art
Setbaşi Bridge
YEŞIL
CUMHURIYET CAD
ATATÜRK CAD
İNÖNÜ CAD
ŞEHREKÜSTÜ

restaurant, but it's the Turkish bath that's its highlight, with top-to-toe marble and a magnificent domed ceiling. 205TL

**Kervansaray Bursa Hotel** **Çekirge Meydani** ⓣ **0224/233 9300,** ⓦ **www.kervansarayhotels.com.** Gargantuan and sumptuous hotel, next to the Eski Kaplıca (Old Baths), with an assortment of swimming pools (the outdoor one is large enough for a proper swim), Turkish baths and saunas. There are five pricey restaurants and a baby-sitting service. 340TL

## The City

Not surprisingly, many of Bursa's oldest monuments are clustered just outside **Hisar**, in today's city centre. The places covered under each heading below can be visited in a leisurely morning or afternoon, but if you can't spare this much time, you could just about manage to see the most spectacular monuments around the **Koza Parkı** and at **Yeşil** in a few rushed hours.

### Heykel

Just across from the main tourist office stands the **Orhan Gazi Camii**, whose 1336 foundation makes it the second-oldest mosque in Bursa. Originally built as a *zaviye* for itinerant dervishes, this is the earliest example of the T-form mosque with *eyvans* flanking the main prayer hall. **Karagöz puppets**, the painted camel-leather props used in the Turkish national shadow-play, are supposed to represent workers who were involved in building the Orhan Gazi Camii. According to legend, the antics of Karagöz and his sidekick Hacıvat so entertained their fellow workmen that Orhan had them beheaded to end the distraction. Later, missing the comedians and repenting of his deed, he arranged to immortalize the pair in the art form that now bears the name of Karagöz.

Just west of Orhan Gazi, the compact **Koza Parkı**, with its fountains, benches and street-level cafés, is the real heart of Bursa – never mind what they say about Heykel. Though animated through the day and early evening, the plaza empties soon after, with the illuminated fountains now dark and still, and the walkways deserted by 11pm – no doubt owing much to the fact that none of the places around here are licensed.

On the far side of Koza Parkı looms the tawny limestone **Ulu Camii**, built between 1396 and 1399 by Yıldırım Beyazit I, from the proceeds of booty won from the Crusaders at Macedonian Nicopolis. Before the battle, Yıldırım (Thunderbolt) had vowed to construct twenty mosques if victorious. The present building of twenty domes supported by twelve free-standing pillars was

### Bursa silk and the cocoon auction

The highlight of the year in Bursa is the **cocoon auction** of late June and early July, when silkworm breeders from around the province gather to hawk their valuable produce. Then, Bursa's Koza Hanı becomes a lake of white torpedoes the size of a songbird's egg; the moth, when it hatches, is a beautiful, otherworldly creature with giant onyx eyes and feathery antennae. You can watch the melee from the upper arcades or, as long as you're careful, the merchants don't mind you walking the floor.

After being sent into a tailspin by French and Italian competition two hundred years ago, the Bursa silk trade has recently experienced a tentative revival. However, the quality of contemporary fabric cannot compare to museum pieces from the early Ottoman heyday and most of the better designs are made up in imported material, which is, however, still better quality than the Turkish. If you're buying silk here, make sure the label says *ipek* (silk) and not *ithal ipek* (artificial silk).

his rather loose interpretation of this promise, but it was still the largest and most ambitious Ottoman mosque of its time. The interior is dominated by a huge *şadırvan* pool in the centre, whose skylight was once open to the elements, and an intricate walnut *mimber* pieced together, it's claimed, without nails or glue. Even less convincing is the tradition stating that the main north portal was remodelled by Tamerlane when he occupied Bursa in 1402–03.

From the north porch you can descend stairs to the two-storeyed **Emir (Bey) Hanı**, originally a dependency of the Orhan Gazi Camii and now home to various offices and shops. A fountain plays under the trees in the courtyard, but with no teahouse or public seating it's not a place to linger. Beyond the Emir Hanı begins Bursa's **covered bazaar** (Mon–Sat 9am–8pm), whose assorted galleries and lesser *hans* are a delight for shoppers hunting for ready-to-wear clothing, silk goods, towels and bolts of cloth and furniture. The nearby *bedesten* is given over to the sale and warehousing of jewellery and precious metals.

The centrepiece of the bazaar is the **Koza Hanı**, or "Silk-Cocoon Hall" (daily 8am–8pm), flanking the park close to the Orhan Gazi Camii. Built in 1491, when Bursa was the final stop on the Silk Route from China, it's still filled with silk and brocade merchants (plus a few jewellery stores). On the lower level, in the middle of a cobbled courtyard, a minuscule *mescit* (small mosque) perches directly over its *şadırvan*, while a subsidiary court bulges asymmetrically to the east; there are teahouses and public benches in both.

Bursa's most central **food market** is in the bazaar's Nilüfer Koylu Pasaja, just above Orhan Gazi Camii on Belediye Caddesi, with an excellent selection of the fruits (strawberries and cherries in spring, peaches and pears in summer), nuts and dairy products for which the region is noted. In the same area, handmade lace and other handicrafts are on sale in **Hanamelsanatlar Sokak** ("Street of Women's Handicrafts"), while flower stalls can be found on İmaret Sokağı. The shopping zone continues east along the narrow, pedestrianized Ukul Sokak, which is lined with shops selling clothes, shoes and household goods.

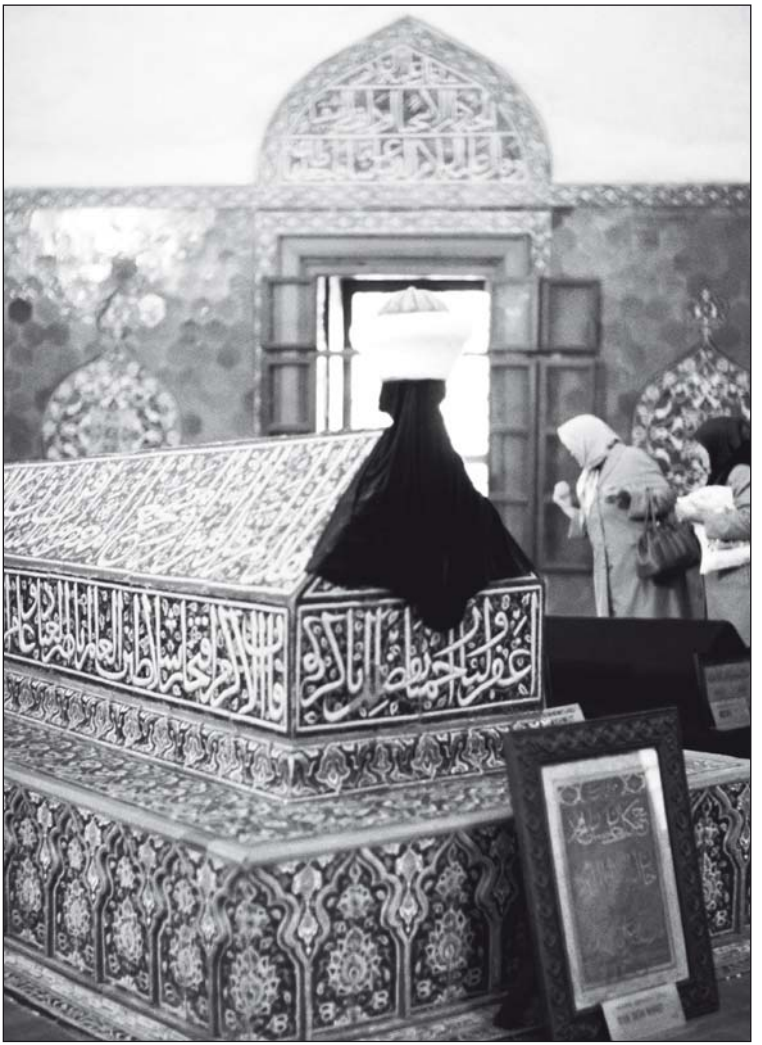
Another area of the bazaar that has kept its traditions intact despite quake and blaze is the **Demirciler Çarşısı**, the Ironmongers' Market. This is just the other side of İnönü Caddesi, best crossed by the pedestrian underpass at Okcular Caddesi. Stall upon stall of blacksmiths and braziers attract photographers, but be advised that some expect a consideration for posing. From here you can easily continue past a small mosque and some cabinet-makers' workshops to **Fırın Sokak**, which is lined with some of the finest old dwellings in town. At the end of this short street a bridge spans the **Gök Dere**, one of two streams that tumble through Bursa, forming an approximate eastern boundary for the centre.

## Yeşil

Across the stream, it's only a few minutes' walk up to **Yeşil**, as the eastern neighbourhood around its namesake mosque and tombs is known. Designed by the architect Hacı Ivaz atop a slight rise, the **Yeşil Camii** was begun in 1413 by Çelebi Mehmet I, victor of the civil war caused by the death of Beyazit I. Despite being unfinished – work ceased in 1424, three years after Mehmet himself died – and despite catastrophic damage from two nineteenth-century earth tremors, it's easily the most spectacular of Bursa's imperial mosques. The incomplete entrance, faced in a light marble, is all the more easy to examine for the lack of a portico; above the stalactite vaulting and relief calligraphy you can see the supports for arches never built.

Pass through a foyer supported by pilfered Byzantine columns to reach the **interior**, a variation on the T-plan usually reserved for dervish *zaviyes*. A fine *şadırvan* occupies the centre of the "T", but your eye is monopolized by the

hundreds of polychrome **tiles** that line not just the *mihrab* but every available vertical surface up to 5m in height, particularly two recesses flanking the entryway. Green and blue pigments matching the carpets predominate, and praying amid this dimly lit majesty must feel something akin to worshipping inside a leaf. Tucked above the foyer, and usually closed to visitors, is the **imperial loge**, the most extravagantly decorated chamber of all. Several artisans from Tabriz participated in the tiling of Yeşil Camii but the loge is attributed to Al-Majnun, which translates most accurately as "intoxicated on hashish". On the same knoll as the mosque, and immediately across the pedestrian precinct separating them, the **Yeşil Türbe** (daily 8am–noon & 1–5pm; free) contains the



▲ The tomb of Çelebi Mehmet I, Yeşil Türbe

sarcophagus of Çelebi Mehmet I and his assorted offspring. Inside, the walls and Mehmet's tomb glisten with the glorious original Tabriz material.

The *medrese* (theology academy), which lies 100m from the summit, now houses Bursa's **Türk ve Bslam Eserleri Müzesi** (Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art: Tues–Sun 8am–noon & 1–5pm; free), set around a pleasant courtyard with fountain, trees and picnic tables. If the museum is short-staffed, certain rooms may be closed, but in theory you can view İznik ware, Çanakkale ceramics, kitchen utensils, inlaid wooden articles, weapons and a mock-up of an Ottoman *sünnet odası*, or circumcision chamber. The exhibition of *hamam* paraphernalia has a local relevance because of the history of bathing in the area, which is probably why Bursa towelling has developed world prominence. In the nineteenth century, however, in place of towels, beautifully embroidered linen cloths were used as wraps. Other signs of wealth were silver bathbowls, bone or tortoiseshell combs, and clogs inlaid with mother-of-pearl, all of which are on display.

## East of Yeşil: to Yıldırım Beyazit Camii

A three-hundred-metre walk east of Yeşil leads to the **Emir Sultan Camii**, lost in extensive graveyards where every religious Bursan hopes to be buried. The mosque was originally endowed by a Bokharan dervish and trusted adviser to three sultans, beginning with Beyazit I, but it has just been restored again after enduring an Ottoman Baroque overhaul early last century, so you can only guess what's left of the original essence. The pious, however, seem to harbour no doubts, coming in strength to worship at the tombs of the saint and his family.

If you're short of time, Emir Sultan Camii is the obvious site to omit: climb down steps through the graveyard instead and cross the urban lowlands to the **Yıldırım Beyazit Camii**, perched on a small hillock at the northeastern edge of the city. If you're coming directly from downtown, this is a substantial hike, so you might want to take a *dolmuş* (marked "Heykel–Beyazit Yıldırım" or the more common "Heykel–Fakülte"), which passes 200m below the mosque. Completed by Beyazit I between 1390 and 1395, the Beyazit Camii features a handsome, five-arched portico defined by square columns. The interior is unremarkable except for a gravity-defying arch bisecting the prayer hall, its lower supports apparently tapering away to end in stalactite moulding. The only other note of whimsy in this spare building is the use of elaborate niches out on the porch.

The associated **medrese**, exceptionally long and narrow because of its sloping site, huddles just downhill; today, it's used as a medical clinic. The **türbe** (tomb) of the luckless Beyazit, kept in an iron cage by the rampaging Tamerlane until his death in 1403, is usually locked. Perhaps the mosque custodians fear a revival of the Ottoman inclination to abuse the tomb of the most ignominiously defeated sultan.

## The Hisar

The **Hisar**, Bursa's original nucleus, nowadays retains just a few clusters of dilapidated Ottoman housing within its warren of narrow lanes and some courses of medieval wall along its perimeter. From where Atatürk Caddesi becomes Cemal Nadir Caddesi in a whirl of traffic, you can climb up to the Hisar plateau via pedestrian ramps negotiating the ancient walls. En route, you'll pass **Zafer Plaza**, a cavernous modern shopping mall, most of it underground but topped by an attractive square and glass pyramid. There are a number of places in here to grab a blast of air-conditioning, some cheesecake and a coffee.

Alternatively, take a walk along Orhangazi Caddesi, home to a rather contrived artists' colony. Where Orhangazi stops climbing, the **Osman and Orhan Gazi Türbesı** stand side by side at the edge of the fortified acropolis that they conquered. The tombs – post-earthquake restorations in gaudy late-Ottoman style – are on the site of a Byzantine church that has long since disappeared except for some mosaic traces near Orhan's sarcophagus.

Far better is the view from the clifftop **park** sprawling around the tombs and clock tower, with reasonable cafés at the head of the walkways down to Cemal Nadir and Altıparmak *caddesi*s. From here you can follow signs west to Muradiye, along the most direct route, or veer inland on a random walk around the neighbourhood. At the southernmost extreme of the citadel you exit at the **Pınarbaşı Kapısı**, lowest point in the circuit of walls and the spot where Orhan's forces finally entered the city in 1326. From there you can stroll parallel to the walls, re-entering at the **Zindan Kapısı**, inside of which is the simple **Alaeddin Camii**, erected within a decade of the Conquest and so the earliest mosque in Bursa.

A more straightforward route follows Hasta Yurdu Caddesi until another generous swathe of park studded with teahouses opens out opposite the public hospital. The furthest teahouses have fine views of the Muradiye district, and from the final café and course of wall, obvious stairs descend to the **Cılımboz Deresi**, the second major stream to furrow the city.

## Muradiye

Across the stream lies medieval **Muradiye**, where Bursa's best-preserved dwellings line streets at their liveliest during the Tuesday **street market**. If you're coming directly from Heykel, take one of the frequent *dolmuşes*.

The **Muradiye Külliyesi** is set in an attractive and peaceful neighbourhood northwest of the city centre. The mosque complex, begun in 1424 by Murat II, was the last imperial foundation in Bursa, though the tombs for which Muradiye is famous were added piecemeal over the next century or so.

The ten royal tombs, **Muradiye Külliyesi Türbesı** (daily: May–Sept 8am–noon & 1–5pm; Oct–April 8am–5pm; free), are set in lovingly tended gardens and open on a rota basis; to get into the locked ones, you must find the gardener-*bekçi* with the keys – no tip is expected for the service. The first tomb encountered is that of **Şehzade Ahmet** and his brother Şehinşah, both murdered in 1513 by their cousin Selim I to preclude any succession disputes. The luxury of the İznik tiles within contrasts sharply with the adjacent austerity of **Murat II's tomb**, where Roman columns inside and a wooden awning out front are the only superfluities. Murat, as much contemplative mystic as warrior-sultan, was the only Ottoman ruler ever to abdicate voluntarily, though pressures of state forced him to leave the company of his dervishes and return to the throne after just two years. He was the last sultan to be interred at Bursa and one of the few lying here who died in his bed; in accordance with his wishes, both the coffin and the dome were originally open to the sky "so that the rain of heaven might wash my face like any pauper's".

Next along is the tomb of **Şehzade Mustafa**, Süleyman the Magnificent's unjustly murdered heir; perhaps a sign of his father's remorse, the tomb is done up in extravagantly floral İznik tiles, with a top border of calligraphy. Nearby stands the tomb of **Cem Sultan**, his elder brother Mustafa and two of Beyazit II's sons, decorated with a riot of abstract, botanical and calligraphic paint strokes up to the dome. Cem, the cultured and favourite son of Mehmet the Conqueror, was one of the Ottoman Empire's most interesting might-have-beens. Following the death of his father in 1481, he lost a brief dynastic struggle

with the successful claimant, brother Beyazit II, and fled abroad. For fourteen years he wandered, seeking sponsorship of his cause from Christian benefactors who in all cases became his jailers: first the Knights of St John at Rhodes and Bodrum, later the papacy. At one point, it seemed that he would command a Crusader army organized to retake İstanbul, but all such plans came to grief for the simple reason that Beyazit anticipated his opponents' moves and each time bribed them handsomely to desist, making Cem a lucrative prisoner indeed. His usefulness as a pawn exhausted, Cem was probably poisoned in Italy by the pope in 1495, leaving nothing but reams of poems aching with nostalgia and homesickness.

A minute's walk from the Muradiye Külliyesi is the **Hüsnü Züber House**, at Uzunyol Sok 3 (Tues–Sun 10am–5pm; 2TL). This former Ottoman guest-house, built in 1836, sports a typical overhanging upper storey, wooden roof and beams and a garden courtyard. It now houses a collection of carved wooden musical instruments, spoons and farming utensils, many of which were made by Hüsnü Züber himself, the present owner, who inhabits the house still. The main exhibit, however, is the house itself, one of the few of its era to have been well restored and opened to the public.

Almost as close is the **Uluumay Ottoman Costumes and Jewellery Museum** (daily 9am–6pm; 5TL), housed in the Şair Ahmet Paşa Medresesi at Murat Cad 2. On show in the cells of this former theological college are a range of original, traditional costumes from all over the former Ottoman domains – from Kosovo to Bursa and from Bosnia to Zonguldak on Turkey's Black Sea. The mannequins the costumes are displayed on revolve in their glass cases when you enter the room and give a vivid impression of the ethnic hodge-podge that was the Ottoman Empire. There's a pleasant garden-café out back where local musicians sometimes hang out and play the flute and the *saz*.

## Kültür Parkı

From Muradiye it's just a short walk down to Çekirge Caddesi and the southeast gate of the **Kültür Parkı** (token admission charge when entry booths are staffed). Inside, there's a popular tea garden, a small boating lake, a disgraceful mini-zoo, and a number of restaurants and *gazino*-style nightclubs. As you stroll, however, it quickly becomes obvious that there's no potential for solitude – though courting couples try their best – and no wild spots among the regimented plantations and too-broad driveways.

At the west end of the park, just below Çekirge Caddesi, is the **Arkeoloji Müzesi** (Archeological Museum: Tues–Sun 8am–noon & 1–5pm; 2TL). Exhibits in the right-hand Stone Room vary from the macabre (a Byzantine ossuary with a skull peeking out) to the homely (a Roman cavalryman figurine), but the adjacent hall featuring metal jewellery from all over Anatolia – watch chains, breastplates, belts, buckles, bracelets, anklets, chokers – steals the show. The left wing houses a modest coin gallery and miscellaneous small ancient objects, the best of which are the Roman glass items and Byzantine and Roman bronzes. Oil lamps, pottery, a token amount of gold and far too many ceramic figurines complete these poorly labelled exhibits; while a garden of sarcophagi, stelae and other statuary fragments surrounds the building.

## Çekirge

The thermal centre of **Çekirge** ("Grasshopper" – presumably a reference to the natural soundtrack of a summer evening) is another twenty-minutes' walk or so

along Çekirge Caddesi from the west side of Kültür Parkı. Buses (including the #2/A), as well as *dolmuşes*, shuttle to and from the *dolmuş* stand near the tourist office on Atatürk Caddesi.

Most visitors come here to experience the Çekirge hot springs, which flow out of Uludağ's mountainside and are tapped into by the various hotels and bath-houses. The **Yeni Kaplıca** (New Baths; daily 6am–10pm; 8TL, 60TL extra for a wash and massage) lie just beyond the Kültür Parkı, accessible by a steep driveway beginning opposite the *Çelik Palas Oteli*. There's actually a clutch of three facilities here: the **Kaynarca baths**, for women only, which is really rather grim and unappealing; the **Karamustafa spa**, for men only; and the Yeni Kaplıca itself, dating in its present form from the mid-sixteenth century, which has a women's section, but is still nothing like as splendid as the men's. According to legend, Süleyman the Magnificent was cured of gout after a dip in the Byzantine baths here and had his vizier Rüstem Paşa overhaul the building. Fragments of mosaic paving stud the floor, and the walls are lined with once exquisite but now blurred İznik tiles.

The **Eski Kaplıca** (Old Baths: daily 7am–10.30pm; 24TL, 15TL extra for a massage), huddled at the far end of Çekirge Caddesi, next to the *Kervansaray Bursa Hotel*, are Bursa's most ancient baths (and much the nicest public bath for women). Byzantine rulers Justinian and Theodora first improved a Roman spa on the site, and Murat I in turn had a go at the structure in the late fourteenth century. Huge but shallow keyhole-shaped pools dominate the *hararetler*, or hot rooms, of the men's and women's sections, whose domes are supported by eight Byzantine columns. Scalding (45°C) water pours into the notch of the keyhole, the temperature still so taxing in the main basin that you'll soon be gasping out into the cool room, seeking relief at the fountain in the middle. Afterwards, the bar in the men's *camekan*, where you recuperate swaddled in towels on a chaise longue, serves alcoholic beverages should you wish to pass out completely. Alternatively, head for the swimming pool of the *Kervansaray Bursa Hotel* next door (daily 8am–11pm; 15TL), where you swim indoors and then under a partition to their heated outdoor section.

On a hillock just west of the thermal centre stands the **Hüdavendigar (Birinci) Murat Camii**, which, with its five-arched portico and alternating bands of brick and stone, seems more like a church teleported from Ravenna or Macedonia. Indeed, tradition asserts that the architect and builders were Christians, who dallied twenty years at the task because Murat I, whose pompous epithet literally means "Creator of the Universe", was continually off at war and unable to supervise the work. The interior plan, consisting of a first-floor *medrese* above a highly modified, T-type *zaviye* at ground level, is unique in Islam. Unfortunately, the upper storey, wrapped around the courtyard that's the heart of the place, is rarely open for visitors.

Murat himself lies in the much-modified **türbe** across the street, complete apart from his entrails, which were removed by the embalmers before the body began its long journey back from Serbia in 1389. In June of that year, Murat was in the process of winning his greatest triumph over the Serbian king Lazarus and his allies at the **Battle of Kosovo**, in the former Yugoslavia, when he was stabbed to death in his tent by Miloş Obiliç, a Serbian noble who had feigned desertion. Murat's son Beyazit, later better known as Yıldırım, immediately had his brother Yakub strangled and, once in sole command, decimated the Christian armies. Beyazit's acts had two far-reaching consequences: the Balkans remained under Ottoman control until early in the twentieth century, and a gruesome precedent of blood-letting was established for most subsequent Ottoman coronations.

# Eating, drinking and entertainment

Bursa's **cuisine** is solidly meat-oriented and served in a largely alcohol-free environment, reflecting the city's conservative nature. The most famous local recipes are *İskender kebap* (essentially *döner kebap* soaked in a rich butter, tomato and yoghurt sauce) – named after its supposed inventor, İskender (Alexander) Usta, a Bursan chef – and *İnegöl köftesi*, rich little pellets of mince often laced with cheese (when they're known as *kaşarli köfte*) and introduced by Balkan immigrants in the 1930s. *İskender kebap* is rich and extremely filling – think twice before going for the *"bir buçuk porsiyon"* (one and half portion) on offer in most places. The city is also famous for its *kestane şekeri* (chestnut-based sweets), and instead of eating Turkish white bread, look out for Bursan *kepekli* (whole bran) loaves at any bakery.

For alcohol with your evening meal, or for a bar, head for the pedestrianized **Sakarya Caddesi** between Altıparmak Caddesi and the walls of the Hisar above, near the clock tower – the former fish market and main street of the Jewish quarter has been reborn as an atmospheric place for an outdoor fish dinner or a drink on a summer's evening. Otherwise, try the **Kültür Parkı**, where you can dine in a peaceful environment.

Bursa has relatively few nocturnal or weekend events, and the student contingent is responsible for any concerts that do occur. The **Kültür Merkezi** or Cultural Centre, on Atatürk Caddesi (☎0224/223 4461), hosts ever-changing art exhibitions and occasional concerts. The **open-air theatre** in the Kültür Parkı is the main venue for the touristy musical performances and folkloric presentations that form a big part of the annual **Bursa Festival** in the last three weeks of July. Earlier in the month, there's the **Altın Kargöz** international folk dance competition, held in the open-air theatre. It lasts a weekend and brings in teams of colourfully dressed troupes from Georgia to Greece and Taiwan to Mexico.

## Cafés and bars

**Café M** **Sakarya Cad 24, Tophane.** *Nargile* (hubble-bubble pipe) and coffee bar, with comfortable sofas to smoke from and watch the world go by. This is a good place to try a *nargile* in an easy-going environment.

**Café Set** **Setbaşı Bridge, Namazgah Cad, Heykel.** Reasonably priced café-bar, which attracts a lively student crowd and has live music on Wed, Fri & Sat. Enjoy a beer on the outdoor terrace looking downstream to the next bridge, or on one of the four levels indoors. It's tucked away below the level of Setbaşi Bridge, so make sure you don't walk right past the sign pointing down the steps.

**Sortie** **Uluca Pasajı Kat 4, off Atatürk Cad, Heykel.** It's not licensed and the food's not wonderful, but this rooftop (summer only, reached by a lift) café is the place to watch the sunset go down over the domed roofs of the Ulu Camii.

**Ulus Pastanesi** **Öztat Apt 92, Atatürk Cad, Heykel.** This tiny, old-fashioned shop/café has been going since 1920 and claims to be the oldest producer of *kestane şekeri* (chestnuts boiled and soaked in sugar) and uses no artificial ingredients. It also does a mean chocolate cake, wonderful Turkish coffee and an array of sugared nuts – and a health-giving mulberry syrup.

## Restaurants

**Abidin Usta** **Tuzpazarı Bayathane Cad 8, Heykel.** A cut above the average bazaar restaurant, aimed at the wealthier shopkeeper and shopper. Offers a wide range of steam-tray dishes (try the mixed fried vegetables) in clean, modern a/c comfort. Unlicensed.

**Arap Sükrü** **Kuruçeşme Mah, Sakarya Cad 6 & 29, Tophane.** Fish in all shapes and sizes (mains from 10TL, starters from 4TL), with beer, wine or *rakı* to wash it down, served at tables on both sides of the cobbled street. Set up in the 1930s by refugees from Salonica, it's the best of the places on this lively pedestrianized street.

**Çiçek İzgara** **Belediye Cad 5, Heykel. Closed Sun.** The best midtown value for lunch and dinner is this popular place on the upper

floor, behind the Belediye building (Town Hall). Flawless service, tableclothed elegance and extremely reasonable prices – the house special *İzgara Köfte* is just 7TL.

**Darüzziyafe** **İkinci Murat Cad 36, Muradiye.** Housed in the beautifully restored *imaret* (kitchen) of the Muradiye Camii, you couldn't ask for more atmospheric surroundings to try *hunkar beğendi* (lamb stew served on a bed of mashed aubergine) or *mantarlı çoban kavurma* (sautéed meat, mushrooms, peppers and onions). Mains are around 10TL, desserts (try the delicate *keskülü fukara*, a kind of walnut and pistachio fool served with *maraş* ice cream. Daily midday to 10pm but is unlicensed.

**Kebapcı İskender** **Atatürk Cad 60, Heykel.** If you're in Bursa, you're beholden to sample *İskender* – and this is the place to do it. The characterful 1930s building sees a steady stream of locals tucking into the only meal on offer – *İskender*. It's not cheap at 15TL but the meat is tender, the rich tomato sauce delicious, and the waiters even come around and drizzle melted butter on top to enrich it further. There's another branch on Unlu Cad 7.

**Mercan Restaurant** **Kervansaray Bursa Hotel, Çekirge Meyd, Çekirge.** A rooftop restaurant with great views and an outdoor terrace. Dishes include smoked salmon, Chateaubriand and pineapple flambé, but you can expect a bill in the region of 80–100TL for two, with wine. It's one of five excellent restaurants in this five-star hotel.

**Piccolo Mavi Balık** **Kuruçeşme Mah, Sakarya Cad 16, Tophane.** This once fashionable bar is now a decent fish restaurant, and if you fancy something more upmarket than the *Arap Sükrü*, this artfully designed place is for you. Mains around 15TL.

**R.C. Cumurcul** **Kültür Parkı.** Housed in a restored Ottoman building with a large terrace, this is one of many relaxed, licensed establishments in the park, where two can eat *mezes* and kebabs, with a bottle of wine, for around 30TL.

**Üç Köfte** **İvaz Paşa Çarşısı 3. Closed Sun.** The name means "Three Meatballs", which is what you get, served up three times over so the food on your plate is always piping hot. Lunch only.

## Listings

**Banks and exchange** There are plenty of banks with ATMs on Atatürk Cad, and exchange offices (Mon–Sat 8am–8pm) in the covered bazaar and on Altıparmak Cad.

**Books** Good stocks of English-language books and foreign magazines at the Oxford Bookshop, Altıparmak Cad 48–50.

**Buses and ferries** Departures are from the bus station (☎0224/261 5400), 10km north of Bursa; regular city buses from Heykel run up there. Kamil Koç, Pamukkale and Varan (and several other companies) run to İstanbul (with ferry transfer). Alternatively, buses run to Yalova to connect with the sea bus to Yenikapı.

**Car rental** Avis, Çekirge Cad 143 ☎0224/236 5133; Budget, Çekirge Cad 39/1 ☎0224/223 4204; Europcar, Çekirge Cad 41 ☎0224/223 2321.

**Consulate** UK (honorary consulate), Resam Şefik Bursalı Sok, off Başak Cad ☎0224/220 0436.

**Hamams** Try the central, historic Çakır Ağa Hamamı, located just below the Hisar on Cemal Nadir Cad (men and women; daily 6am–midnight; 8TL); or İkinci Murat, next to the Muradiye tomb complex (Fri & Sun men only, all other days women only; daily 10am–6pm; 12TL).

**Hospitals** Devlet (State) Hastanesi, Hasta Yurdu Cad, Hisar ☎0224/220 0020; Üniversite Hastanesi, P. Tezok Cad, Hastane Sok, Çekirge ☎0224/442 8400.

**Internet access** Bursa is well endowed with cybercafés, a reliable option is the *Bara Internet* on Kocaoğlu Sok.

**Left luggage** At the bus station (open 24hr).

**Police** Police station at Cemal Nadir Cad.

**Post office** Main PTT branch at the corner of Atatürk and Maksem *caddesis* (24hr for telephone and telegrams, daily 8am–8pm for letters & 9am–5.30pm for full postal services).

# Uludağ

Presiding over Bursa, the 2543-metre-high **Uludağ** is a dramatic, often cloud-cloaked massif, its northern reaches dropping dizzyingly into the city. In ancient times, it was known as the Olympos of Mysia, one of nearly twenty peaks around the Aegean so named (Olympos was possibly a generic Phoenician or Doric word for "mountain"), and it has a place in mythology as the seat from which the gods watched the battle of Troy. Early in the Christian era, the range became a refuge for monks and hermits, who were replaced after the Ottoman Conquest by Muslim dervishes.

These days, the scent of grilling meat has displaced the odour of sanctity, since Bursa natives cram the alpine campsites and picnic grounds on any holiday or weekend. Getting there is definitely half the fun if you opt for the **cable car** (*teleferik*), which links the Teleferüç borough of Bursa with the **Sarıalan** picnic grounds at 1635m, where a cluster of *et mangals* (barbecue grillhouses) and *kendin pişin kendin ye* (rent-a-barbecue establishments) await your custom.

Much of the dense middle-altitude forest has been designated a **national park**, though there are only a few kilometres of marked hiking trails. In fact, the best part of the mountain lies outside the park to the east, where a few-hours' walking will bring you to some glacial **lakes** in a wild, rocky setting just below the highest summit. The prime months for a visit are May and June, when the wildflowers are blooming, or September and October, when the mist is less dense. However, due to its proximity to the Sea of Marmara, the high ridges trap moist marine air, and whiteouts or violent storms can blow up during most months of the year.

**Skiing** is possible from December to March (though it's better earlier in the season than later). There's a dense cluster of hotels (3500 beds in all), some with their own ski lift, at **Oteller** (1800m), where you can rent skis (around 45TL per day) and ski clothes. There are thirteen different skiing areas (around 30TL per day for a lift pass) served by eight chair lifts and seven T-bars. Prices and lift queues rise dramatically at weekends and in public holidays (the school mid-winter break is usually the last week in Jan, first in Feb).

## Practicalities

To reach the lower cable-car terminus, take a *dolmuş* labelled "Teleferik" from the rank behind the Atatürk statue (just south of Atatürk Cad). The wobbly *teleferik* gondolas make the half-hour trip up to Sarıalan every ten minutes or so in peak periods, every forty minutes in slack spells (daily 8am–10pm outward, 7.50am–10.20pm return; 3TL each way), but are cancelled in high winds. Long queues are the norm at weekends and in the summer school holidays (mid-June to mid- Sept) weekends. At Sarıalan, at the top, there's an army of *dolmuşes* waiting to take you to Oteller.

The alternative is to take a **dolmuş** all the way to Oteller, which winds the 32km of paved road up from Bursa's Orhangazi Caddesi. The one-way fee is 3.5TL per person, though it can occasionally be difficult to muster the necessary number of passengers (six). You can follow the same route in your own vehicle, the road veering off above Çekirge and climbing rapidly through successive vegetation zones. Staff at the **Karabelen national park gate**, 20km into the park, charge 3TL per car when they're in the mood and sometimes have **information** to hand out. The final stretch of road, from just below the gate to the hotels at Oteller, is very rough cobble, designed to prevent drivers from skidding

– or speeding – so allow an hour for the trip. In bad weather, you'll be advised to put chains on your wheels – and may not be allowed to make the journey without them.

There's little difference between the four- and five-star resort **hotels** at the road's end in Oteller; in the skiing season, you'll find rates of over 340TL per night with full board – and no shortage of people prepared to pay – though prices of the hotels that remain open drop considerably out of season. Top of the range is the monumental *Grand Yazıcı* (Ⓣ0224/285 2050, Ⓕ285 2048; doubles from 225TL), which offers all the facilities you'd expect, including a heated swimming pool, saunas, and a games and TV room. More moderately priced is the *Ergün* (Ⓣ0224/285 2100, Ⓔinfo@ergunotel.com; doubles 150TL), which has its own disco and cinema (après-ski is more important than the white stuff to many of Uludağ's nouveau riche visitors). For more information on Uludağ's hotels, check Ⓦwww.uludaghotels.com, which serves as an umbrella site for the resort's accommodation and offers online booking.

## Walking routes

From the top of the hotel zone, a jeep track leads in an hour and a half to a **tungsten mine**. An obvious path, beginning behind the mine's guardhouse, slips up onto the broad but barren watershed ridge, just below the secondary summit of **Zirve** (2496m); follow this trail for an hour and a half to a fork. Right leads to the **main peak** (2543m); the cairned left-hand choice is more rewarding, descending slightly to overlook the first of Uludağ's lakes, **Aynalıgöl**, reachable by its own side-trail a half-hour beyond the junction. There are some campsites here but none at **Karagöl**, the second and most famous lake, fifteen minutes further southeast, sunk in a deep chasm and speckled with ice floes. **Kilimligöl**, the third substantial lake, is tucked away on a plateau southeast of Karagöl and offers good high-altitude camping.

Returning to Oteller, as long as the weather is good you can stay with the ridge rather than revisiting the tungsten works, passing below the ruined hut on Zirve to meet a faint trail. This soon vanishes, and thereafter it's cross-country downhill along the watershed as far as **Cennetkaya**, a knoll above the hotels, served by a marked trail. High above the trees, crowds and jeep tracks, you just might strike lucky and glimpse patches of the distant Sea of Marmara to the north.

21

# Çanakkale, Troy and Gallipoli

Two of history's bloodiest campaigns – one legendary, one all too real – were played out near the mouth of the **Dardanelles**, the narrow strait connecting the Aegean with the Sea of Marmara, some 310km southwest of İstanbul. The ancient city of **Troy**, scene of the epic conflict between heroes such as Achilles and Hector and immortalized by the father of Western literature, Homer, has long gripped the imagination of people around the world. A much more recent conflict, the Allied forces' disastrous attempt to force the Dardanelles during World War I, also has great significance, particularly for Australians, New Zealanders and the Turks themselves, who all see it as marking the beginning of their "birth" as independent nations.

The obvious base from which to visit either or both of these sites is the modern town of **Çanakkale**, on the southern, Asian side of the Dardanelles; the World War I landing sites at **Gallipoli** (Gelibolu) on the European side of the Dardanelles are a short ferry-ride away, and Troy lies just 30km to the south. For the pilgrimage to Gallipoli, some people chose **Eceabat**, at the southern end of the Gelibolu peninsula and opposite Çanakkale, as their base. Its only significance is as the major ferry terminal for the straits, but it's the nearest town to the battlefield and landing sites and takes on a character of its own around ANZAC Day (April 25). An alternative and more attractive base is the peninsula's main town, **Gelibolu**, which has a small fishing harbour and a better range of restaurants than Eceabat.

## Çanakkale

It's the **Dardanelles** (Çanakkale Boğazı in Turkish) that have defined **ÇANAKKALE**'s history and its place in myth. The area's Classical name, **Hellespont**, is owed to one Helle, who, while escaping from her wicked stepmother on the back of a winged ram, fell into the swift-moving channel and drowned. From Abydos, just northeast of modern Çanakkale, the youth Leander used to swim to Sestos on the European shore for trysts with his lover Hero, until one night he too perished in the currents; in despair, Hero drowned herself as well. Byron narrowly escaped being added to the list of casualties on his swim in the opposite direction in 1810.

## Tours

The **World War I battlefields and Allied cemeteries** scattered along the Gelibolu peninsula are a moving sight, the past violence made all the more poignant by the present beauty of the landscape. The whole area is now either fertile rolling country, or cloaked in thick scrub and pine forest alive with birds, making it difficult to imagine the carnage of 1915. Much of the flatter land is still farmed, and ploughing often turns up pieces of rusting equipment, fragments of shrapnel, human bones and even unexploded munitions. **Troy** is set in an equally haunting landscape, and it's even harder to picture the legendary deeds of Achilles, Agamemnon, Odysseus et al – the site itself, despite the plethora of explanatory boards, is difficult for the layman to interpret. Indeed, a guided tour to either of these sites can enhance your visit significantly.

Several companies in Çanakkale, Eceabat and Gelibolu offer **tours** (45–60TL per person); the sites visited varies, as does the length of the tours, so check what's included in the itinerary. Çanakkale-based tours include: Hassle Free Tours, operated by the *Anzac House Hostel* (see p.286); Troy Anzac TOURS, just west of the Saat Kulesi at Yali Cad 2 (☎0286/217 5849, ⓦwww.troyanzac.com); and the *Yellow Rose Pension* (see p.286). The premier tour company in Eceabat is *TJ's Hostel* (☎0286/814 3121, ⓦwww.anzacgallipolitours.com). All four also offer daily **Troy tours** for 45–50TL, including transport, entry to the site and guide. In **Gelibolu**, the *Hotel Yılmaz* (☎0286/566 1256, Ⓕ566 3598) runs daily tours to the Gallipoli sites.

Alternatively, you can book a **tour from İstanbul**. Hassle Free, at Yeni Akbıyık Cad 10 in Sultanahmet (☎0212/458 5500, ⓦwww.anzachouse.com), run long, one-day guided tours visiting the battlefield sites (155TL, 170TL with an overnight in their Çanakkale hostel, another 35TL to include Troy). Pasifik Travel at Divan Yolu 34 in Sultanahmet (☎0212/519 1684, Ⓕ522 9327) offer similar packages.



In 480 BC, Xerxes' Persian hordes crossed the waters on their way to Greece; and in 411 and 405 BC, the last two naval battles of the Peloponnesian War took place in these straits, the latter engagement ending in decisive defeat for the Athenian fleet. Twenty centuries later, Mehmet the Conqueror constructed the elaborate fortress of Kilitbahir directly opposite the Çimenlik Kale in Çanakkale (which he also built), to tighten the stranglehold being applied to doomed Constantinople. In March 1915, an Allied fleet attempting to force the Dardanelles and attack İstanbul was repulsed, with severe losses, by Turkish shore batteries, prompting the even bloodier land campaign usually known as Gallipoli. These days, the straits are still heavily militarized, and modern Çanakkale is very much a navy town.

## Arrival and information

Regular **buses**, run by Çanakkale Truva, Radar, Metro and Kamil Koç companies, make the 310-kilometre trip to Çanakkale from İstanbul's Esenler bus station (5hr 30min; 40TL). The bus will drop you near the ferry terminal in the town centre, close to all the listed accommodation. To return the same way, buy your ticket from the bus companies opposite the tourist office. You can either board near the ferry terminal or take a free service bus to the station and board there. Alternatively, **sea buses** depart Yenikapı ferry terminal in İstanbul for Bandirma (2hr 30min; 30TL), from where frequent buses head on to Çanakkale (2hr 30min; 18TL). Atlas Jet (ⓦwww.atlasjet.com) **flies** from İstanbul (daily except Sat 9.30pm, returns daily except Sun 7am; 40min); *dolmuşes* and taxis ferry arrivals the 7km from the airport into town.

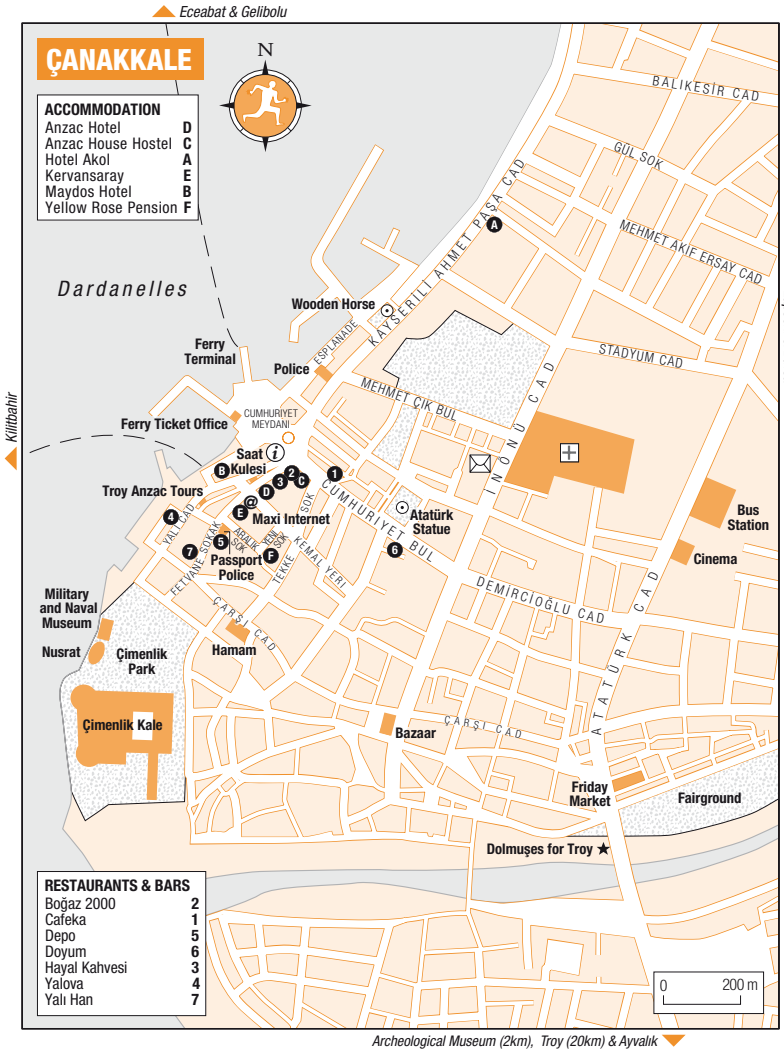
If you don't want to take a tour (see box above), you can catch a *dolmuş* **to Troy** from the minibus garage opposite the fairground on Atatürk Caddesi

(daily 10am–7.30pm; every 1hr 30min; 4TL); but you'll need your own transport to reach the battlefield sites **in Gallipoli**.

The **tourist office** on Cumhuriyet Meydanı (May–Sept Mon–Fri 8.30am–7.30pm, Sat & Sun 10.30am–6pm; Oct–April Mon–Fri 8.30am–5.30pm; ⓣ0286/217 1187, ⓔcanakkaletourism@hotmail.com), next to the main dock is, in summer at least, staffed by friendly, English-speaking students.

## Accommodation

Other than around ANZAC Day (April 25), you'll have little trouble finding a room. The most obvious budget options are only a few-minutes' walk from the ferry terminal. Just south of the tourist office, the Saat Kulesi (clock tower) signals



the entrance to a warren of alleys – Fetvane Sokak, Aralık Sokak, Yeni Sokak – that are home to various inexpensive hotels and *pansiyons*. Moving across Demircioğlu Caddesi, or closer to the water, you'll find the more upscale hotels.

**Anzac Hotel** Saat Kulesi Meydani 8 ⓣ0286/217 7777, ⓦwww.anzachotel.com. Practically opposite the Saat Kulesi, this well-run two-star place has neat, plainly decorated en-suite rooms with satellite TV, a/c, mini-bar and safe-box, plus a tub as well as shower in the immaculate bathrooms. 80TL

**Anzac House Hostel** Cumhuriyet Meydani 61 ⓣ0286/213 5969, ⓦwww.anzachouse.com. Well-equipped, clean backpackers' hostel offering basic dorms (14TL) with laminate flooring, double-glazed windows and spotless bedding. Downstairs there's internet access, a video room (where *Gallipoli* starring Mel Gibson is shown nightly) and the Hassle Free travel agency office, who can arrange Gallipoli and Troy tours.

**Hotel Akol** Kordon Boyu ⓣ0286/217 9456, ⓦwww.hotelakol.com. Multistorey, four-star hotel on the seafront north of the main dock offering a decent level of impersonal luxury – good-sized rooms, all with TV and a/c (some with sea views), several restaurants, a rooftop bar, outdoor pool and wi-fi. 160TL

**Kervansaray** Fetvahane Sok 13 ⓣ0286/217 8192, ⓦwww.otelkervensaray.com. Quiet, polite and friendly affair run by the *Anzac Hotel* people, housed in an unusual (for Turkey) red-brick mansion built a little over a hundred years ago for an Ottoman judge. It has a lovely courtyard garden and has a new annexe with superior (and dearer) rooms. 105TL

**Maydos Hotel** Yalı Cad 12 ⓣ0286/814 1454, ⓦwww.maydos.com.tr. This is close as Çanakkale gets to modernism, with a Scandinavian feel to the tastefully furnished rooms. The bathrooms are spot-on, too, though there's no tub. Front rooms have sea views, those high up at the rear look to the forested hills behind town. Satellite TV, mini-bar and a/c are standard. The attached restaurant has a nice, light modern feel to it. 150TL

**Yellow Rose Pension** Yeni Sok 5 ⓣ0286/217 3343, ⓦwww.yellowrose.4mg.com. Fifty metres back from the Saat Kulesi, with basic – but en suite – rooms of varying size, plus dorms (14TL). Breakfast is included. Also laundry service, video room, internet access and battlefield tours. 35TL

## The Town

The name *Çanakkale* means "Pottery Castle", after the garish Çanakkale ware that finds its way into the ethnographic section of every Turkish museum. Fortunately, none of this is conspicuous, the only nod to the local style being in a few appealing, early twentieth-century buildings in the tiny **bazaar** just south of the nucleus of cheap hotels. There's more interesting shopping at the large **Friday market**, five-minutes' walk south of the bus station on Atatürk Caddesi.

Continue past the bazaar area to **Çimenlik Park**, site of the **Çimenlik Kale** (daily 9am–10pm; free), a fifteenth-century fortress constructed by Mehmet the Conqueror during his march north towards Constantinople. The northern half of the park is given over to the town's **Deniz Müzesi** (Military and Naval Museum: daily except Mon & Thurs 9am–noon & 1.30–5pm; 3TL), where you can see archive photos (such as Seddülbahir in ruins after Allied shelling and Atatürk's funeral) as well as military paraphernalia and a model of the Gallipoli campaign. Beached on the park's esplanade – from where you get the best views of Çimenlik's sister fort, Kilitbahir, across the straits – is a replica of the minelayer **Nusrat** (same hours and ticket as museum), which stymied the Allied fleet by re-mining at night zones that the French and British had swept clean by day.

An hour should be enough to take in the **Arkeoloji Müzesi** (Archeological Museum: daily except Mon & Thurs 8.30am–noon & 1–5.30pm; 5TL), nearly 2km from the centre of town; flag down any *dolmuş* along Atatürk Caddesi signed "Kepez" or "Güzelyalı". The collection is poorly labelled and the interior

very gloomy, but some of the exhibits are quite stunning. Most impressive is the Polyxena Sarcophogus, the earliest relief-carved sarcophogus found in Asia Minor, dating back to the sixth century BC. One of the scenes carved on the side of the funerary monument depicts the sacrifice of Polyxena, a daughter of King Priam of Troy, by Achilles' son, Neoptolemus. Quite different but equally striking is a cabinet of terracotta figurines from ancient Assos. Dating from the fourth century BC, the quality of these grave goods, mainly depicting musicians, is superb. Also look out for the case of gold wreaths and diadems, and a lovely figurine of the goddess Aphrodite. The large garden area is littered with remnants from the classical-era sarcophagi – including columns, capitals, votive stelae and huge earthenware storage jars.

In addition to the museums, the town's main attraction is the **waterfront** itself, with its wide esplanade lined with dozens of cafés and restaurants. It's also home to a replica of the Trojan **wooden horse** (it featured in the 2004 Hollywood film *Troy*), which has been erected in Morrabin Parkı just north of the ferry terminal.

## Eating, drinking and nightlife

**Restaurants** and **cafés** line almost the full length of the quayside, both north and south of the main ferry terminal, offering a wide variety of dishes, including (inevitably) plenty of fish and seafood. As a simple rule of thumb, the further from the terminal you go, the cheaper the prices, the only exception being the mobile stalls that set up for business every evening just north of the terminal selling roasted corn-on-the-cob for 1TL.

While **nightlife** for many locals tends to involve nothing more strenuous than a promenade and a meal along the front, the presence in town of a large student population means there's a burgeoning and surprisingly lively bar scene. Indeed, Fetvane Sokak, a narrow lane lined with some of the town's more attractive buildings, is now known locally as Barlar Sokak (Street of the Bars). Needless to say, things get even livelier around ANZAC Day, when Australians and New Zealanders make their presence felt. Several of the venues have **live music**, usually in an upstairs room, with a modest cover charge that includes a "free" local drink.

### Restaurants

**Boğaz 2000** **Saat Kule Meydanı.** One of the cheapest options, deservedly popular for both lunch and dinner. A dish with rice can cost as little as 5TL (if you can get a seat).

**Cafeka** **Cumhuriyet Meydanı 28.** Çanakkale's top gourmet choice, this boasts a funky yet elegant indoor dining space and has a surprisingly affordable menu, including modern interpretations of traditional dishes, such as spiced meatballs with herb yoghurt, chili salsa and sautéed potatoes for 9TL. The big salad bowls are good value at 10TL (one is enough for two people), and various pasta dishes are also on offer at the same price. It also does an incredible range of coffees, many with exotic flavours. Licensed.

**Doyum** **Cumhuriyet Meydanı 13.** The best kebab and *pide* restaurant in town, always packed with locals. It's spotlessly clean, the waitresses attentive and the dishes well priced. The *kaşarlı pide* comes dripping with its tasty cheese topping, and the kebabs are tender. They even do *içli köfte*, a spicy meatball wrapped in a bulgur-wheat coating. You'd be hard-pushed to spend more than 12TL, considerably less if you go for *lahmacun* or *pide*.

**Yalova** **Eski Balikhane Sok 31.** Established in the 1930s in the old fish market, it has a lovely old tiled floor in the downstairs eating area, a stylish roof terrace with views over the sea, and offers a wide range of fish and seafood – the best in town. Farmed fish (sea bass or sea bream) are around 15TL a portion, their "wild' brethren are sold per kilo

price – and work out much more expensive. Starters range from 4TL for vegetable-based dishes to 15TL for seafood *meze*.

### Bars

**Depo** **Fetvane Sok.** The main attraction here is the large outdoor courtyard lined with multi-coloured beanbags, which is as popular with the local youth as with tourists. There's also a small indoor dancefloor.

**Hayal Kahvesi** **Fetvane Sok.** An offshoot of İstanbul's famous *Hayal Kahvesi* club, this is a cavernous bar with a courtyard café and live music upstairs most evenings. A 50cl beer will set you back 5TL, 3TL during Happy Hour. To see the band (usually rock covers), it's 8TL including a drink.

**Yalı Han** **Fetvane Sok.** Just down from *Depo*, this restored *han* is actually a couple of bars, a café and a long, narrow upstairs room where covers bands knock out everything from the best Turkish rock songs (Duman) to U2. The courtyard is particularly pleasant, and always packed with locals and students.

## Listings

**Banks and exchange** A number of banks (Mon–Fri 9am–12.30pm & 1.30–5pm) and ATMs line Fetvane Sokak and Cumhuriyet Meyd.

**Car rental** Delta Rent A Car, Cumhuriyet Meydani 21/1 ⓣ0286/814 1218.

**Cinema** The cinema below the Gima shopping centre, next door to the bus station, shows mainstream releases in English with Turkish subtitles. There's also a much smaller cinema housed within the Belediye Iş Merkezi, behind the Atatürk statue.

**Internet access** *Maxi Internet Café*, Fetvane Sok. The Belediye Iş Merkezi also has many smaller internet cafés, and access is available from most of the hotels and hostels, though these tend to be overpriced.

**Hospital** Hasan Mevsuf Sok ⓣ0286/217 1098.

**Newspapers** English-language newspapers from Orka Kitabevi, Yali Cad 5.

**Police** Kayserili Ahmet Paşa Cad, just north of the ferry terminal.

**Post office** PTT on Inönü Cad (Mon–Sat 8am–11pm).

**Telephones** Booths can be found in Cumhuriyet Meydani; there's a small PTT shop within the Belediye Iş Merkezi and a Turk Telecom shop on Carsi Cad.

# Troy

**But Aunt Dot could only think how Priam and Hecuba would have been vexed to see the state it had all got into and no one seeming to care anymore. She thought the nations ought to go on working at it and dig it all up again, and perhaps do some reconstruction, for she belonged to the reconstruction school, and would have liked to see Troy's walls and towers rising once more against the sky like a Hollywood Troy, and the wooden horse standing beside them, opening mechanically every little while to show that it was full of armed Greeks.**

Rose Macaulay, *The Towers of Trebizond* (1956)

Although by no means the most spectacular archeological site in Turkey, **Troy**, thanks to Homer, is probably the most celebrated. Known as Truva in Turkish, the remains of the ancient city lie around 20km south of Çanakkale, just west of the main road. It's a scanty affair on the whole, but if you lower your expectations and heighten your imagination, you may well be impressed. The ruins are now a lot less obscure than previously, with modern scientific methods managing to fill the gaps left by earlier excavations. Recent work has served to clarify the site greatly, to the extent that laypeople can now at least grasp the basic layout and gain a knowledge of the different settlement periods discovered.

Until 1871, Troy was generally thought to have existed in legend only. The Troad plain, where the ruins lie, was known to be associated with the Troy that Homer wrote about in the *Iliad*, but all traces of the city had vanished completely. In 1868, **Heinrich Schliemann** (1822–1890), a German businessman who had made his fortune in America, obtained permission from the Ottoman government to start digging on a hill known to the Turks as Hisarlık, where earlier excavators had already found the remains of a Classical temple and signs of further, older ruins.

Schliemann was born into a poor Mecklenburg family and became obsessed at an early age with the myths of ancient Greece. Unable to pursue the interest professionally (although he did teach himself ancient Greek, in addition to several modern languages), he amassed his considerable fortune during the Californian Gold Rush of 1849, forsaking commerce at the age of 46 to become the world's most celebrated and successful amateur archeologist.

Schliemann's sloppy trenching work resulted in a certain amount of damage to the site, only rectified by the first professional archeologist to work at Troy, the respected Carl William Blegen, whose excavations began in 1932. Schliemann was also accountable for removing the so-called **Treasure of Priam**, a large cache of beautiful jewellery that was taken back to Berlin and subsequently displayed there until 1941, when it was squirrelled away for safety under Zoo Station. The hoard disappeared during the Red Army's sacking of the city in May 1945; long suspected of having been spirited back to the USSR, it resurfaced spectacularly in Moscow in August 1993 and is now on display in the Pushkin Museum there. A legal tussle between Germany and the Russian Federation to determine ownership is now in progress – as well as careful forensic examination of the precious items to answer allegations that Schliemann fraudulently assembled the treasure from scattered sites in Asia Minor.

Whatever Schliemann's shortcomings, his initial, unsystematic excavations did uncover nine layers of remains, representing distinct and consecutive city developments that span four millennia. The oldest, **Troy I**, dates back to about 3600 BC and was followed by four similar settlements. Either Troy VI or VII is thought to have been **the city described by Homer**: the former is known to have been destroyed by an earthquake in about 1275 BC, while the latter shows signs of having been wiped out by fire about a quarter of a century later, around the time historians generally estimate the Trojan War to have taken place. **Troy VIII**, which thrived from 700 to 300 BC, was a Greek foundation, while much of the final layer of development, **Troy IX** (300 BC to 300 AD), was built during the heyday of the Roman Empire.

Although there's no way of being absolutely sure that the **Trojan War** did take place, there's a fair amount of circumstantial evidence suggesting that the city was the scene of some kind of armed conflict, even if it wasn't the ten-year struggle described in the *Iliad*. It's possible that Homer's epic is based on a number of wars fought between the Mycenaean Greeks and the inhabitants of Troy, who, it seems, were alternately trading partners and commercial rivals. Homer's version of events, however, dispensed with these pedestrian possibilities, turning the war into a full-scale heroic drama, complete with bit parts for the ancient Greek gods.

## The site

The **site** (daily: May–Sept 8am–7pm; Oct–April 8am–5pm; 15TL) is signalled by the ticket office – marked "Gişe" – just opposite the *dolmuş* drop-off point. There are a few small shops here where you can pick up a copy of *Troia/Wilusa* by

Dr Manfred Korfman (20TL), the archeologist who, between 1988 and his death in 2005, oversaw the site's excavation. The book is copiously illustrated and really helps bring Troy to life, especially as it contains a map that will guide you around and pages of information corresponding to numbers on the signs at the site.

From the ticket office, a long, straight road leads to the car park (4TL) and beyond to the ticket barriers, which mark the site's official entrance. Just to the right stands a 1970s reconstruction of the giant **wooden horse** (which would have delighted Macaulay's fictional Aunt Dot). You can climb a ladder leading up into the horse's belly and look out of windows cut into its flanks (which presumably didn't feature in the original design). The adjacent **excavation house** has a scale model of the site (when it's not out on loan) and an excellent video explaining the history of Troy and the excavations. Just beyond is the ruined city itself, a craggy outcrop overlooking the Troad plain, which extends about 8km to the sea. The circular trail takes you around the site, the twelve panels enlisting the help of schematic diagrams, going some way to bringing the ruins to life. It's a bleak spot, however, leaving you in no doubt as to the thinness of Troy's remains, but as you stand on what's left of the ramparts and look across the plain that stretches out at your feet, it's not too difficult to imagine a besieging army, legendary or otherwise, camped below.

Most impressive of the extant remains are the **east wall and gate** from Troy VI (1700–1275 BC), of which 330m remain, curving around the eastern and southern flanks of the city. The inward-leaning walls, 6m high and over 4m thick, would have been surmounted by an additional brick section. A ramp paved with flat stones from Troy II (2500–2300 BC), which would have led to the citadel entrance, also stands out, as does the nearby partially reconstructed **Megaron Building** (protected beneath a giant sail-shaped canopy) from the same era, the bricks of which were turned a bright red when Troy II was destroyed by fire. Schliemann, erroneously as it turned out, used the evidence of this fire to draw the conclusion that this had been Homer's Troy and that the items he discovered here made up the Treasure of Priam.

The most important monument of Roman Troy IX, or Ilium, probably erected in the reign of Augustus (31 BC– 14 AD), is the **temple of Athena**. According to the Greek historian Strabo, an earlier temple on the same site was erected by one of Alexander the Great's generals, Lysimachus, after Alexander himself had visited the site and left his armour as a gift. Remains found by Schliemann proved the temple to be of the Doric order, and fragments of its coffered ceiling can still be seen on site. The most famous relief from the temple, however, depicting Apollo astride four pawing stallions, is now in Berlin. Troy was an important religious centre during Greek and Roman times, and the remains of two other **sanctuaries**, which were also renovated after the visit of Alexander the Great, can be seen at the westernmost point of the site. It's thought that the female deities Cybele and Demeter were worshipped here, because the layout, with altar and grandstand, is similar to the sanctuary in Pergamun.



# Gallipoli

Burdened with a grim military history, but endowed with some fine scenery and beaches, the slender **Gelibolu (Gallipoli) peninsula** – roughly 60km in length and ranging between 4km and 18km wide – forms the northwest side of the **Dardanelles** (Çanakkale Boğazı in Turkish, the ancient Hellespont), the

narrow strait connecting the Aegean with the Sea of Marmara. Whether you approach the peninsula from Şarköy or (more likely) Keşan, the road there is pretty, swooping down in long arcs past the Saros gulf.

Site of the 1915 **Gallipoli landings** by the Allied troops, the peninsula contains a mind-numbing series of battlefields and cemeteries that tell of the tragic defeat by the Turkish forces. For Turks, the region also holds a great deal of significance, as the Gallipoli campaign made famous a previously unknown lieutenant-colonel, Mustafa Kemal, later to become Atatürk.

## Some history

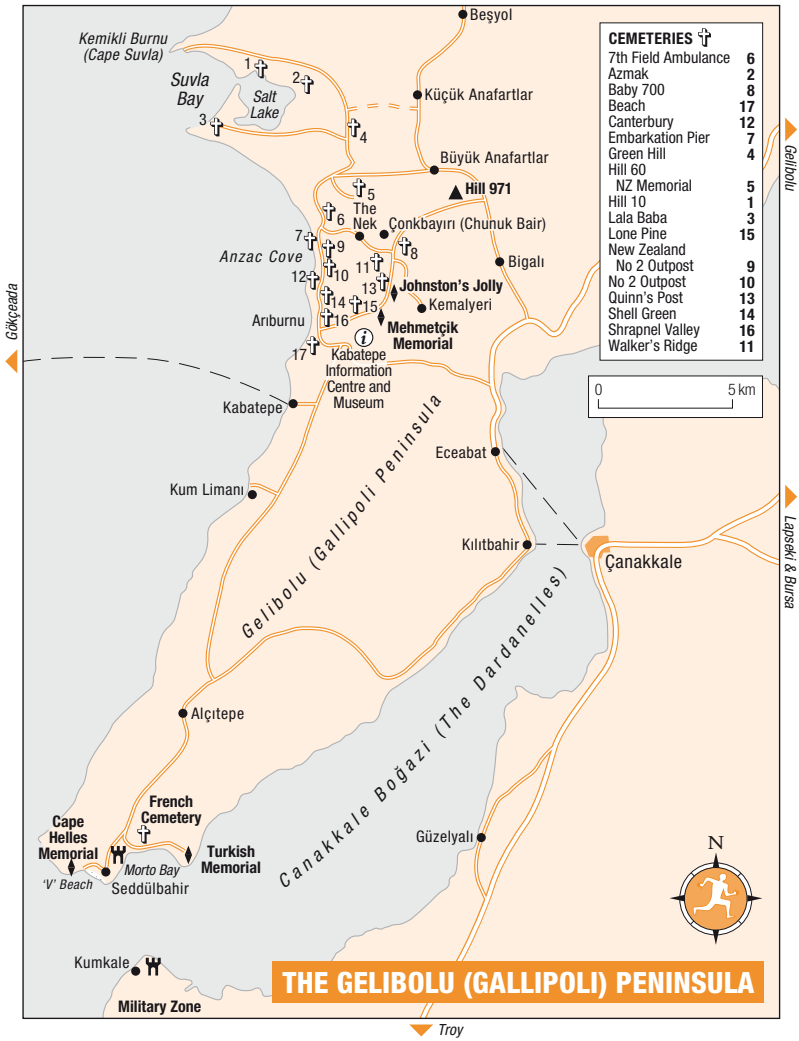
Soon after the start of World War I it became obvious to the Allies that Russia could not be supplied by sea, nor a Balkan front opened against the Central Powers, unless Ottoman Turkey was eliminated. **Winston Churchill**, in his earliest important post as First Lord of the Admiralty, reasoned that the quickest way to accomplish this would be to force the Dardanelles with a fleet and bombard İstanbul into submission. A combined Anglo–French armada made several attempts on the straits during November 1914, which were repulsed, but they returned in earnest on March 18, 1915. This time they managed to penetrate less than 10km up the waterway before striking numerous Turkish mines, losing half a dozen vessels and hundreds of men. The Allies retreated and command squabbles erupted over allocation of troops to the campaign. The generals saw the Western Front as paramount, whereas politicians – foremost among them, Churchill – wanted to knock Turkey out of the war first in order to weaken Germany, while at the same time exciting anti-Turkish feelings in Bulgaria and bringing it, too, into the war.

Regrouped at Mudros harbour on the Greek island of Limnos, the joint expeditionary forces took several months to prepare an amphibious assault on the Turkish positions along the peninsula. During this time, the British had no way of knowing that Turkish forces defending the straits were cripplingly under-supplied. Had they attempted it, another naval sprint down the Dardanelles might have succeeded, but instead the delay gave the Turks the chance to strengthen their own defences.

**The plan** eventually formulated by the British and French commanders called for an Anglo–French landing at Cape Helles, Seddülbahir and Morto Bay at the mouth of the straits, and a simultaneous **ANZAC** (Australia–New Zealand Army Corps) assault at Kabatepe beach 13km north. The two forces were to drive towards each other, link up and neutralize the Turkish shore batteries controlling the Dardanelles.

### ANZAC Day

**ANZAC Day**, April 25, is the busiest day of the year for the Gelibolu peninsula, as thousands of Australians and New Zealanders arrive to commemorate the Allied defeat, providing a huge annual boost to the local economy. The day begins with the **Dawn Service** at 5.30am at ANZAC Cove, though most people arrive much earlier to camp out, as the police close all the roads around the grave sites to traffic from 3am. The service used to be a somewhat informal ceremony, but in recent years thousands have attended, and it now features official speeches, prayers and a representative from the Australian or New Zealand forces playing a poignant "Last Post" as the sun rises over ANZAC Cove. An hour's breakfast break follows before the rest of the morning's ceremonies resume – **wreath laying** at the British, French and Turkish memorials, and more services at the Australian memorial at Lone Pine and the New Zealand memorial at Chunuk Bair.




The Australians landed first at dawn on April 25, 1915, with the British and French making shore around an hour afterwards, followed by the New Zealanders later in the day. The rather hare-brained scheme ran into trouble from the start. Anglo–French brigades at the southernmost cape were pinned down by accurate Turkish fire, and the French contingent was virtually annihilated; after two days, they had only managed to penetrate 6.5km inland – and never managed to move any further. The fate of the ANZAC landing was even more horrific: owing to a drifting signal buoy, the Aussies and Kiwis disembarked not on the wide, flat sands of Kabatepe, but at a cramped and Turkish-dominated cove next to Arıburnu, 2km north. Despite heavy casualties (around 2000 on the first day alone), the ANZACs advanced inland

in staggered parties, as the Turks initially retreated. The next day, goaded by their commanders, they managed to threaten the Turkish strongpoint of Çonkbayırı overhead. It was here that one Mustafa Kemal, a previously unknown lieutenant-colonel, rushed in reinforcements, telling his poorly equipped troops, "I do not order you to fight, I order you to die." Amazingly, it worked: the ANZAC force never made it further than 800m inland, despite a supplementary British landing at Cape Suvla to the north. With the exception of ferocious battles for the summit in early August, both sides settled into long-term trench warfare. Finally, around Christmas 1915, the Allies gave up, with the last troops leaving Seddülbahir on January 8, 1916. Churchill's career went into temporary eclipse, while that of Mustafa Kemal was only just beginning.

The reasons for the **Allied defeat** are many. In addition to the chanciness of the basic strategy, the callousness and incompetence of the Allied commanders – who often countermanded each other's orders or failed to press advantages with reinforcements – cannot be underestimated. With hindsight, you cannot help but wonder why the Allies didn't concentrate more on Cape Suvla and the flat, wide valley behind, skirting the fortified Ottoman heights to reach the Dardanelles' northwest shore. On the **Turkish side**, much of the credit for the successful resistance must go to Mustafa Kemal, then relatively obscure, but later better known as **Atatürk**. His role in the Turkish victory at Çonkbayırı is legendary. Mustafa Kemal seemed to enjoy a charmed life, narrowly escaping death on several occasions, and, aside from his tactical skills, is credited with various other extraordinary accomplishments, but primarily that of rekindling morale, by threats, persuasion or example, among often outgunned and outnumbered Ottoman infantrymen.

At various times, half a million men were deployed by defenders and attackers alike; of these, well over fifty percent were **killed**, **wounded or missing**. Allied deaths were around 52,000, while incomplete records have led to estimates of Turkish dead to be anywhere between 50,000 and 200,000. The carnage among the ANZACs, in particular, was especially severe compared to the island-nations' populations, but would in fact be dwarfed by the number of ANZACs killed on the Western Front later in the war – around 10,600 lost their lives in the Gallipoli campaign compared with some 60,000 for the entire war. Claims voiced in some quarters that the Allied top brass regarded the "colonials" as expendable cannon fodder have never fully been borne out; indeed, more British and Irish troops died at Gallipoli than ANZACs, with two Irish battalions suffering over fifty percent casualties on the first day and the 42nd Manchester Division being almost completely wiped out. However, this baptism by blood had several long-term effects: a sense of Australia and New Zealand having come of age as sovereign countries; the designation of April 25 as ANZAC Day, a solemn holiday in Australia and New Zealand; and a healthy antipodean scepticism, pending an evaluation of actual national interest in the face of blandishments to join international adventures.

## The central and northern sites

The first stop on most tours is at the recently refurbished **Kabatepe Information Centre and Museum** (daily 8.30am–5pm; 2.5TL), 9km northwest of Eceabat, which contains a well-labelled selection of war memorabilia, including touching letters home, photographs of the trenches, weapons and uniforms. The only sour note is the rather ghastly inclusion of some human, presumably Allied, remains.

The first points encountered along the coast road north of the centre are the **Beach**, **Shrapnel Valley** and **Shell Green** cemeteries – the latter 300m inland up a steep track, unsuitable for all but 4WD vehicles, and consequently missed out by most tours. These are followed by **ANZAC Cove** and **Arıburnu**, site of the first, bungled ANZAC landing and location of the dawn service on ANZAC Day. At ANZAC Cove, a memorial bears Atatürk's famous quotation concerning the Allied dead, which, translated into English, begins: "Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives … you are now lying in the soil of a friendly country." Looking inland, you'll see the murderous badlands that gave the defenders such an advantage. Beyond Arıburnu, the terrain flattens out and the four other **cemeteries** (Canterbury, No. 2 Outpost, New Zealand No. 2 Outpost and Embarkation Pier) are more dispersed.

A couple of kilometres north of Arıburnu are the beaches and salt lake at **Cape Suvla**, today renamed Kemikli Burnu ("The Bone-strewn Headland"), location of another six **cemeteries**: Hill 10, Azmak, 7th Field Ambulance, Green Hill, Lala Bala and Hill 60 (with its memorial to the New Zealand forces). All contain mainly English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish dead, with ANZAC graves also in Hill 10 and 7th Field Ambulance. The roads up here are little more than dirt tracks, and most tours don't make it this far.

From ANZAC Cove, tours go uphill along the road northeast that roughly follows what was the front line, to the strong points (now cemeteries) scattered around **Çonkbayırı** hill. To the left of this road is **Shrapnel Valley** – the single, perilous supply line that ran up-valley from the present location of Beach Cemetery to the trenches. First up is **Lone Pine** (Kanlı Sırt), lowest strategic position on the ridge and the largest graveyard-cum-memorial to those buried unmarked or at sea. Action here was considered a sideshow to the main August offensive further up Çonkbayırı; a total of 28,000 men died in four days at both

▲ Mehmetçik Memorial

points. Just up from Lone Pine is the **Mehmetçik Memorial** to the Turkish soldiers who perished, and at **Johnston's Jolly** (named after an officer who liked to "jolly the Turks up" with his gun) is a heavily eroded section of **trench**, peaceful now beneath the pine trees. **Quinn's Post**, the scene of some of the fiercest fighting of the entire campaign, is now "home" to 473 of the fallen, 294 of them unidentified.

From here the road forks: to the left is **The Nek** – the scene of Peter Weir's film *Gallipoli* – and **Walker's Ridge** cemetery; to the right, the road continues uphill to **Baby 700** cemetery – the high-water mark of the Allied advance on April 25 – and to the massive New Zealand memorial obelisk and the five-monolith Turkish memorial on the crest of **Çonkbayırı** hill (Chunuk Bair). On the Turkish memorial are Atatürk's words and deeds – chief among the latter being his organization of successful resistance to the Allied attacks of August 6–10. The spot where the Turkish leader's pocket watch stopped a fragment of shrapnel is highlighted, as is the grave of a Turkish soldier discovered in 1990 when the trenches were reconstructed. On this part of the front, the trenches of the opposing forces lay within a few metres of each other, and the modern road corresponds to the no-man's-land.

## To the southern cape

The harbour of **KABATEPE** village lies 2km south of the Kabatepe Information Centre. There's a good beach to the north of town – intended site of the ANZAC landing – but if you're after a swim, wait until you reach **KUM LIMANİ**, another 3km further south, where an even better strand fringes a warm, clean, calm sea, unusual this far north. There's been little development of this beautiful setting, but you probably won't be alone: a number of tour companies bring their clients here for a dip after battlefield sightseeing. There's recommended **accommodation** at the friendly *Kum Motel* (☎0286/814 1455, ✉otelkum@superonline.com; 150TL), though it's not cheap, even though the price includes a buffet breakfast and evening meal. You can camp in the grounds for 12TL and make use of the motel's attractive beach-bar. Call ahead and someone will pick you up from the Eceabat–Kabatepe *dolmuş*; otherwise, it's a three-kilometre walk from Kabatepe harbour.

The British **Cape Helles Memorial** obelisk adorns the Turkish equivalent of Land's End, 16km beyond Kum Limanı and just past the village of Seddülbahir. From Cape Helles itself, the views south to Bozcaada (Tenedos), west to Gökçeada (Imvros) and east to Asia are magnificent, and abundant **Ottoman fortifications** hint at the age-old importance of the place. Tucked between the medieval bulwarks is an excellent beach, the **V Beach** of the Allied expedition, behind which is a **campsite** – and the biggest of five **British cemeteries** in the area. A turning just before Seddülbahir leads to the **French Cemetery** above Morto Bay, one of the most striking of all the memorials, with its serried rows of named black crosses, and to the nearby **Turkish Memorial**, resembling a stark, tetrahedral footstool. Locally organized tours rarely venture this far, so if you're intent on seeing these two, you'll have to make your own arrangements.

## Eceabat

**ECEABAT** is less attractive than Gelibolu, 40km away to the north, and smaller than Çanakkale, but is the best base for visiting the battlefield sites, whether by yourself or on a tour. **Buses** from İstanbul drop you near the ferry

jetty, from where **car ferries** run across the Dardanelles to Çanakkale hourly, 24 hours a day (2TL passengers; 22TL cars). The bus-company ticket offices are right in front of the jetty at Cumhuriyet Meydanı. There's a **PTT booth** by the jetty, changing money and offering a metered phone until 9pm. **Emails** can be picked up at the *Gina Internet Café*, across the road from *TJ's Hostel* on Cumhuriyet Caddesi, and **bike rental** arranged at both of these places.

**Accommodation** is plentiful, but you'll need to book well ahead if you want to stay over for ANZAC Day. Best budget option in town by far is the backpacker-friendly *TJ's Hostel*, Cumhuriyet Cad 5 (Ⓣ0286/814 3121, Ⓦwww.anzacgallipolitours.com), run by the formidable TJ and his Australian wife. It has become something of an institution, though at the time of writing the old hostel was closed for renovation and all accommodation currently is in the *Eceabat* on İskele Meydanı. One floor is devoted to traditional hostel-style dorms (15TL) and doubles (40TL), with the next two floors further steps up in quality (70TL). Extras include a laundry, book exchange, screenings of *Gallipoli*, and a lively rooftop bar, with views over the sea. Also on İskele Meydanı is the *Ece* (Ⓣ0286/814 1210; 35TL) offering simple rooms, and the stone-faced *Aqua Hotel*, near the jetty, with smart modern rooms, many with sea views (Ⓣ0286/814 2458, Ⓦwww.heyboss.com; 60TL).

By general consensus, the best **food** in town is served at the *Liman*, a well-priced fish restaurant with an attractive wooden interior on İskele Caddesi, around 400m south of the ferry terminal. A little closer to the town is *Hanimeli*, with *mantı* for 7TL and *gözleme* a pricy 4TL, but it makes a change from the usual joints, and is female run. There's a line of simple *pide* and *kebap* salons in front of the jetty, plus a smattering of antipodean-named **bars** around *TJ's Hostel*, easily spotted by the Australian and New Zealand flags hanging outside.

## Gelibolu

**GELIBOLU** – principal town of the peninsula and 35km north of the main battlefield sites – is a reasonably attractive harbour town, perched just where the Dardanelles begin to narrow in earnest. It served as the Anglo–French headquarters during the Crimean War, though the town's history goes back at least as far as the fifth century BC when it was allied with Athens against the invading Persians. It's still a military outpost today, where young Turks on their two-year National Service practise for their passing-out parades at the various military installations around town.

At the heart of town is a colourful square **fishing harbour**, ringed by cafés and restaurants, its two pools separated by a broad stone **tower**, which is all that remains of the fortifications of Byzantine Callipolis. The fortress was held by an army of rebelling Catalan mercenaries for seven years in the early fourteenth century and later fell to the Ottomans (1354), who rebuilt and expanded it. These days, the tower houses the **Piri Reis Müzesi** (Piri Reis museum: Tues–Sun 9.30am–5.30pm; free), dedicated to the legendary fifteenth-century Turkish cartographer (the first man to comprehensively map the Americas), but also containing a small number of local archeological finds and some old photos of the straits. The only other significant monuments are a historic **mosque** in the marketplace and, well inland to the northeast, a few sturdy but otherwise unremarkable Ottoman **tombs**.

### Practicalities

Buses from İstanbul, en route to Çanakkale, will drop you at the **bus station** 500m out of town on the Eceabat road. If you're in your own vehicle, the **ferry jetty** is

right at the inner-harbour entrance; ferries run hourly, 24 hours a day (2TL, 24TL cars) to Lapseki, across the Dardanelles.

For **accommodation**, a short walk up the main street, Liman Caddesi, and then uphill along Taşçılar Caddesi, brings you to the *Otel Dilmaç* at Yukarı Çarşı 1 (Ⓣ0286/566 3212, Ⓔinfo@geliboluemlak.com; 40TL), whose garish pink facade hides well-appointed rooms with TVs, air-conditioning, internet access, mini-bars and friendly staff. There's an interesting display of brass ship-fittings in the lobby of the *Hotel Oya* on Miralay Şeflik Aker Caddesi, the next street left off Liman Caddesi (Ⓣ&Ⓕ0286/566 0392; 60TL): the rooms here are very clean, with TV, air-conditioning and fridge, though those at the front with a balcony are twice the size of those at the back. Between the lighthouse and an army camp extends a serviceable **beach**, with a free **campsite** operated by the local municipality.

When **eating out**, don't miss the local catch of freshly grilled *sardalya* (sardines), at the excellent *Imren*, to the left of the harbour on Balıkhane Sok 26, which is both cheap and licensed; expect to pay 20–25TL for starters, fish and a beer. The *İlhan*, right on the waterfront at Liman İçi (you need to circumnavigate the small harbour from the ferry-landing point to get here) has the best location, with fish dishes starting at 10TL and *karides guveç* (shrimps oven-baked in a clay and flavoured with a tomato sauce and melted cheese) 8TL. A great alternative is the *Gelibolu Osmanlı Mutfağı*, just up from the harbour on Atatürk Cad 34. Established in 1931, this local, family-run business (the current proprietor's great-grandfather was a Mevlevi dervish – you can see his picture on the wall) is a sprawling restaurant serving every kind of Turkish food, from *pide* to kebab and okra stew to spinach in a yoghurt sauce. It's great value, with great food, but is unfortunately unlicensed.

22

# Edirne

Out on the Thracian plain, some 230km northwest of İstanbul and only a short distance from the Greek and Bulgarian frontiers, lies the beautifully preserved Ottoman city of **EDIRNE**. Although tiny in comparison to İstanbul, with a population of around 130,000 people, it has a clutch of impressive buildings that reflect the fact that this was once the capital city of the Ottoman Empire. One of these, the Selimiye Camii, the crowning achievement of the imperial architect Mimar Sinan, is arguably the finest Ottoman mosque anywhere.

A lively yet relaxed and attractive town occupying a rise overlooking the meeting of the Tunca, Arda and Meriç rivers, Edirne's life is derived from day-tripping tourists, students from the town's university and the annual **Kırkpınar oil-wrestling festival**, the most important in the country.



## Some history

There has always been a settlement of some kind at this strategic point, and its military importance has fated it to be captured – and sometimes sacked for good measure – repeatedly over the centuries. Thracian Uscudama was refurbished as Hellenistic Oresteia, but the city really entered history as **Hadrianopolis**, designated the main centre of Roman Thrace by Emperor Hadrian. Under the Byzantines, it retained its significance, not least as a forward base en route to the Balkans – or, more ominously from the Byzantine point of view, first stop en route to attempts on the imperial capital itself. Unsuccessful besiegers of Constantinople habitually vented their frustration on Hadrianopolis as they retreated and a handful of emperors met their end here in pitched battles with Thracian "barbarians" of one sort or another.

The **Ottomans** had by the mid-fourteenth century enmeshed the Byzantines in a web of mutual defence treaties and links by marriage and gained their first permanent foothold on the coast of Thrace. In 1361, Hadrianopolis surrendered to the besieging Murat I and the provisional Ottoman capital was effectively transferred here from Bursa. A century later, Mehmet the Conqueror trained his troops and tested his artillery here in preparation for the march on Constantinople; indeed, the Ottoman court was not completely moved to the Bosphorus until 1458. Thanks to its excellent opportunities for hunting and falconry, Edirne, as the Turks renamed it, remained a favourite haunt of numerous sultans for three more centuries, earning the title *Der-I Saadet* or "Happiness Gate" – when, it's said, there were enough victory celebrations, circumcision ceremonies and marriages to make even Constantinople jealous.

Decline set in during the eighteenth century, prompted largely by an **earthquake** in 1751. During each of the **Russo-Turkish wars** of 1829 and 1878–1879, the city was occupied and pillaged by Tsarist troops; far worse were

the Bulgarians, who in 1913 presided over a four-month spree of atrocities. The Greeks, as one of the victorious World War I Allies, **annexed Edirne** along with the rest of Turkish Thrace from 1920 to 1922, and Turkish sovereignty over the city was only confirmed by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne.

# Arrival and information

Buses from İstanbul (Esenler) arrive at Edirne's **bus station**, just over 2km southeast of the centre (17 daily 5am–midnight; 2hr 30min); a free service minibus will whisk you to points opposite the Belediye (town hall). There are a couple of bus offices on Talat Paşa Caddesi, including the reliable Volkan, where you can buy your return to İstanbul (16 daily 5am–8.30pm) and get a service minibus out to the bus station. Arriving by train is less appealing: the journey from İstanbul takes over six hours and the station is 1km beyond the bus station; from here, a taxi (15TL) is the easiest option.

There are two moderately useful **tourist offices** in Edirne: the first at Hürriyet Meydanı 17 (Mon–Fri 8.30am–5pm; ⓣ0284/213 9208); the second, the office of the Tourism Directorate, at Talat Paşa Cad 76 (Mon–Fri 8.30am–5pm, until 7pm in summer; ⓣ0284/225 5260), about 500m west of the first office, towards the Gazi Mihal bridge. Both outlets supply tourism-ministry brochures and a colourful **map** of Edirne – the latter also sometimes stocked by hotels in town. Edirne's main annual event is the **Kırkpınar festival** in early July (see box, p.303).

# Accommodation

As hotels are often booked solid, **accommodation** can be tight in Edirne. During the main Turkish holidays and the Kırkpınar festival, you'll need to reserve well in advance. Most places are expensive, as Edirne's strategic location brings it sufficient, and comparatively undemanding, custom. However, high prices on display in hotel lobbies should be taken with a pinch of salt – bargaining commonly achieves discounts of up to fifty percent. Maarif Caddesi has some reasonable cheaper options,.

**Aksaray Pansiyon** **Alipaşa Ortakapı Cad 9 ⓣ0284/212 6035, ⓕ225 3901.** This nineteenth-century wood-built mansion, painted a brilliant white, offers good-value and characterful accommodation with both en-suite and cheaper, waterless, rooms available. 60TL

**Antik Hotel** **Garanti Bankası Sok 6 ⓣ0284/225 1555, ⓕ225 1556.** This beautifully restored mansion has bags of atmosphere. The rooms are comfortable, with high ceilings and moulded plasterwork, though their elegance has been compromised by the en-suite bathrooms. The fitted carpet with the name of the hotel woven into it also jars – but there's nowhere else quite like it in town.120TL

**Efe Hotel** **Maarif Cad 13 ⓣ0284/213 6166, ⓦwww.efehotel.com.** Unprepossessing concrete from the outside, this family-run hotel is clean and modern, with stylish a/c rooms, satellite TV, and an English-style pub on the ground floor. The courtyard out back, shaded by a giant fig tree, is a haven from the busy streets around the bazaar. The family are enthusiastic about their home town, and know all the best places to eat, drink and visit – and may well accept less than the rack rate. 150TL

**Grand Atuhan Hotel** Saraçlar Cad, PTT Yanı ⓣ0284/213 2200, ⓦwww.altuhanhotel.com. Glitzy new place with a central location above a bank. Don't be put off by the *Paparazi Bar* adjacent to the foyer, with its tropical fish-tank bar, as the rooms are plain, simple and comfortable, the bed linen crisp and white and the en-suite bathrooms spotless. Central heating, a/c and a flat-screen TV complete the profile. Breakfast included. 120TL

**Park** Maarif Cad 7 ⓣ0284/213 5276, ⓕ225 4635. Not quite as spruce as the *Efe*, a few doors down, but nevertheless a clean and modern choice, though there's an upmarket karaoke bar and grill-restaurant on the ground floor. Breakfast included. 100TL

**Rüstem Paşa Kervansarayı** İki Kapalıhan Cad 57 ⓣ0284/215 2489, ⓦwww.kervansarayhotel.net. Restored sixteenth-century *kervansaray* whose cool, cave-like rooms are set around a pleasant garden-courtyard. Noise is minimal as its substantial walls are quite soundproof, but the decor is uninspiring – neither faux-Ottoman nor modern, it falls uncomfortably between stools. 140TL

# The City

You can tour the main sights of Edirne on foot, but as the Ottoman monuments are widely scattered you'll need a full day to do it. Many lie to the north and west of town, deliberately rusticated by the early sultans to provide a nucleus for future suburbs. Because of the depopulation suffered by the city during the last three centuries, urban growth has never caught up with some of them and many have a rather forlorn atmosphere. Walking, you'll follow the willow-shaded banks of the **Tunca River** for some distance, but midsummer is hot and humid and what starts out as a pleasure can end up feeling more like a punishment. Public transport doesn't connect up the more far-flung sites, but you could hire a **phaeton** from outside the Belediye (show the driver the sites you wish to visit on the map and bargain hard) or take a taxi.

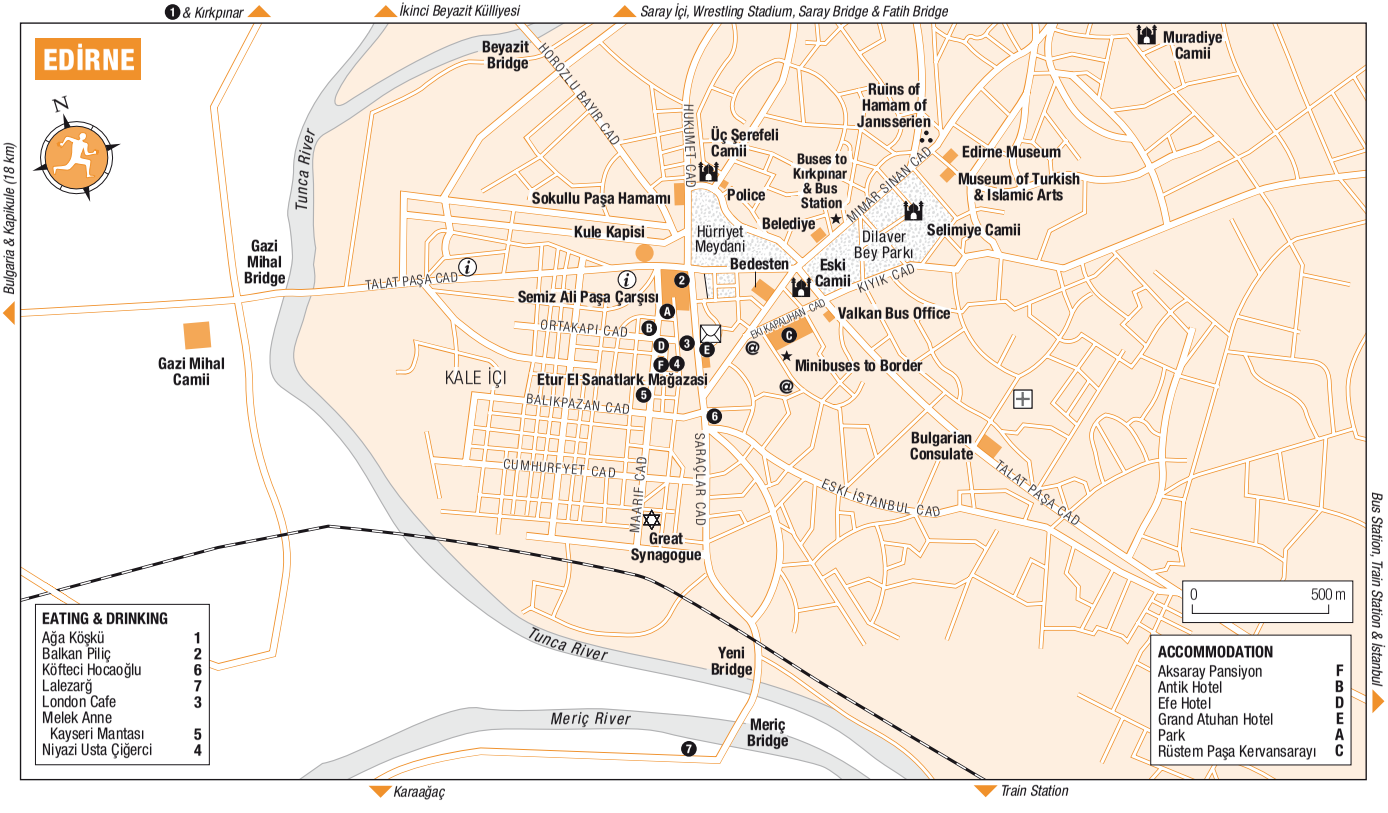
## Eski Camii and the Bedesten

The logical starting point is **Eski Camii**, the oldest mosque in town, right across from the Belediye. This boxy structure, topped by nine vaults arranged three-square, is a more elaborate version of Bursa's Lulu Camii. Emir Süleyman, son of the luckless Beyazit I, began it in 1403, but it was his younger brother Mehmet I – the only one of three brothers left alive after a bloody succession struggle – who dedicated it eleven years later. The mosque is famous for its giant works of **calligraphy**, the most prolific being the large Arabic inscriptions on either side of the front door, one in the name of Allah, the other of Mohammed.

Just across the way, Mehmet I constructed the **Bedesten** (closed Sun), Edirne's first covered market, a portion of whose revenue went to the upkeep of the nearby mosque. The barnlike building, with its fourteen vaulted chambers – again indebted to a Bursa prototype – has been restored in the past decade, but modern shops and poor paintwork make the interior drab and unimpressive.

## Semiz Ali Paşa Çarşısı, Kule Kapısı and Kale İçi

The other main covered bazaar in Edirne is the nearby **Semiz Ali Paşa Çarşısı** (closed Sun), whose north entrance lies about 250m west, on the corner of Talat Paşa and Saraçlar *caddesi*s. The bazaar was established by Mimar Sinan in 1568 at the behest of Semiz Ali, one of the most able and congenial of


EDİRNE
1 & Kırkpınar
İkinci Beyazit Külliyesi
Saray İçi, Wrestling Stadium, Saray Bridge & Fatih Bridge
Bulgaria & Kapikule (18 km)
Bus Station, Train Station & İstanbul
Karaağaç
Train Station
Beyazit Bridge
HOROZLU BAYIR CAD
Tunca River
HUKUMET CAD
Üç Şerefeli Camii
Ruins of Hamam of Janısserien
Muradiye Camii
Buses to Kırkpınar & Bus Station
Police
Belediye
MIMAR SINAN CAD
Edirne Museum
Museum of Turkish & Islamic Arts
Selimiye Camii
Sokullu Paşa Hamamı
Kule Kapisi
Hürriyet Meydani
Dilaver Bey Parkı
Gazi Mihal Bridge
TALAT PAŞA CAD
Bedesten
Eski Camii
KIYIK CAD
Semiz Ali Paşa Çarşısı
EKKAPIJHAN CAD
Valkan Bus Office
ORTAKAPI CAD
Minibuses to Border
Gazi Mihal Camii
KALE İÇI
Etur El Sanatlark Mağazası
BALIKPAZAN CAD
SARAÇLAR CAD
Bulgarian Consulate
CUMHURIYET CAD
MAARIF CAD
ESKI ISTANBUL CAD
TALAT PAŞA CAD
Great Synagogue
Tunca River
Yeni Bridge
Meriç River
Meriç Bridge
0
500 m
EATING & DRINKING
Ağa Köşkü 1
Balkan Piliç 2
Köfteci Hocaoğlu 6
Lalezarğ 7
London Cafe 3
Melek Anne Kayseri Mantası 5
Niyazi Usta Çiğerci 4
ACCOMMODATION
Aksaray Pansiyon F
Antik Hotel B
Efe Hotel D
Grand Atuhan Hotel E
Park A
Rüstem Paşa Kervansarayı C

the Ottoman grand viziers. A massive fire in 1992 burned out many of its 130 shops, but renovations have been administered with care – particularly impressive is the beautiful multi-domed ceiling.

Just opposite the north entrance looms the **Kule Kapısı** (Tower Gate), sole remnant of the town's Roman/Byzantine city walls; the Ottomans, in a burst of confidence after expanding the limits of empire far beyond Edirne, demolished the rest. The gate was partially restored some years ago, and with a team of archeologists scrabbling around in the excavations, promises to become more of a fixture on Edirne's sightseeing list.

West of the Semiz Ali sprawls the **Kale İçi** district, a rectangular grid of streets dating from Byzantine times and lined with much-interrupted terraces of medieval houses. A stroll through here will uncover some surviving stumps of Byzantine wall.

## Üç Şerefeli Camii and the Sokullu Paşa Hamamı

Slightly north of Semiz Ali and Hürriyet Meydanı stands **Üç Şerefeli Camii**, which replaced the Eski Camii as Edirne's Friday mosque in 1447. Ten years in the making, its conceptual daring represented the pinnacle of Ottoman religious architecture until overshadowed by the Selimiye Camii a short time later. Ongoing restorations mean that the courtyard and outer complex are still closed, though the prayer hall has reopened.

The mosque's name – "three-balconied" – derives from the presence of three galleries for the *muezzin* on the tallest of the four whimsically idiosyncratic **minarets**; the second highest has two balconies, the others one, and their bases are all different. Each of the multiple balconies is reached by a separate stairway within the minaret. The **courtyard**, too, was an innovation, centred on a *sadırvan* (ritual ablutions fountain) and ringed by porphyry and marble columns pilfered from Roman buildings. The experimental nature of the mosque is further confirmed by its **interior**, much wider than it is deep and covered by a dome 24m in diameter. It was the largest that the Turks had built at the time and, to impart a sense of space, the architect relied on just two free-standing columns, with the other four recessed into front and back walls to form a hexagon.

Right across from the mosque is the sixteenth-century **Sokullu Paşa Hamamı** (daily 6am–10pm; separate wings for men and women; 8TL, massage 8TL extra, scrub 8TL extra, obligatory 1TL tip for the towel boy), built by Mimar Sinan. Locals rate it as the best in town, and it's certainly a bargain when compared to the famous baths in İstanbul, though it's not as well maintained as it might be.

## Selimiye Camii and the museums

The masterly **Selimiye Camii**, one of Turkey's finest mosques, was designed by the eighty-year-old Mimar Sinan (see box, p.95) in 1569 at the command of Selim II. The work of a confident craftsman at the height of his powers, it's visible from some distance away on the Thracian plain and is virtually the municipal symbol, reproduced on the sides of Edirne's buses, among other places.

You can approach the Selimiye across the central park, Dilaver Bey, then through the **Kavaflar Arasta** (Cobbler's Arcade: closed Sun), which was built by Sinan's pupil Davut and is still used as a covered market, full of household goods and cheap clothing – every day, under the market's prayer dome, the

## Oil wrestling and the Kırkpınar festival

Oil wrestling (*yağlı güreş*) is popular throughout Turkey but reaches the pinnacle of its acclaim at the doyen of tournaments, the annual Kırkpınar festival, staged early each summer on the Saray İçi islet outside Edirne. The preferred date is the first week of July, but the three-day event is moved back into June if it coincides with Ramazan or either of the two major *bayram*s (religious holidays) following it.

The wrestling matches have been held annually, except in times of war or Edirne's occupation, for more than six centuries and their origins are shrouded in legend. The most commonly repeated story asserts that Süleyman, son of Orhan Gazi, was returning from a battle in 1360 with forty of his men and decided to camp at a village near Edirne. To pass the time, the soldiers paired off to wrestle; the last two were unable to best each other after several days of tussling, and in a final elimination match expired simultaneously after midnight. Their companions buried them on the spot, and returning to visit the graves the next season, were astonished to find instead a lush meadow with forty springs (*kırk pınar* in Turkish) bubbling away. Forty is one of the sacred numbers of Islam, and the Ottomans needed little encouragement to inaugurate a commemoration.

Despite the rather sterile environment of the stadium that now hosts the wrestling, traditional routines still permeate the event. The contestants – up to a thousand per year – dress only in leather knickers called *kisbet* and are slicked from head to toe in diluted olive oil. Wrestlers are classed by height, not by weight, from toddlers up to the *pehlivan* (full-size) category. Warm-up exercises, the *peşrev*, are highly stereotyped and accompanied by the *davul* (deep-toned drum) and *zurna* (single-reed Islamic oboe), the music provided by the local Romany population. The competitors and the actual matches are solemnly introduced by the *cazgır* or master of ceremonies, usually himself a former champion.

The bouts, several of which take place simultaneously, can last anything from a few minutes to a couple of hours, until one competitor collapses or has his back pinned to the grass. Referees keep a lookout for the limited number of illegal moves or holds, and victors advance more or less immediately to the next round until, after the second or third day, only the *başpehlivan* (champion) remains. Despite the small prize purse, donated by the *Kırkpınar Ağaları* – the local worthies who put on the whole show – a champion is usually well set-up in terms of appearance and endorsement fees and should derive ample benefit from the furious on- and off-site betting. In the main, gladiators tend to be villagers from all over Turkey who have won regional titles, starry-eyed with the prospect of fame and escape from a rural rut.

### Festival practicalities

The wrestling itself spreads over three days, with the opening ceremony and children's bouts taking place from mid-afternoon Friday. Saturday's action lasts from midday until 5pm, with the final bouts and award/closing ceremonies between midday and 7pm on the Sunday. The best way to get tickets is through booking agent Biletix (see p.26).

Free buses run from the Belediye building to the stadium (around 10min). The Edirne municipality invariably organizes a series of ancilliary events that prolong the festivities to up to six days and include free Turkish music concerts in the park below the Selimiye Camii at 9pm each evening. For more information, see Ⓦ www.kirkpinar.com.

shopkeepers promise that they will do their business honestly. The mosque **courtyard**, approached from the Kavaflar Arasta up a flight of stone steps, is surrounded by a colonnaded portico, with ancient columns surmounted by arches of alternating red and white stone supporting a roof made up of domes of varying size. Its delicately fashioned *şadırvan* is the finest in the city. The four identical, slender minarets each have three balconies – Sinan's nod to his predecessors – and at 71m are the tallest in the world after those in Mecca. The detailed carved portal once graced the Ulu Camii in Birgi and was transported here in pieces, then reassembled.

But it is the celestial **interior**, specifically the dome, which impresses most. Planned expressly to surpass that of Aya Sofya in İstanbul, it manages this – at 31.5m in diameter – by a bare few centimetres, and Sinan thus achieved a lifetime's ambition. Supported by eight mammoth but surprisingly unobtrusive twelve-sided pillars, the cupola floats 44m above the floor, covered in calligraphy proclaiming the glory of Allah. Immediately below the dome, the *muezzin*'s platform, supported on twelve columns, is an ideal place from which to contemplate the proportions of the mosque. The delicate painting on the platform's underside is a faithful restoration of the original, and gives some idea of how the mosque dome must once have looked. The water of the small marble drinking fountain beneath symbolizes life, under the dome of eternity. The most ornate stone carving is reserved for the *mihrab* and *mimber*, backed by fine İznik faïence illuminated by sunlight streaming in through the many windows allowed by the pillar support scheme.

An associated *medrese*, at the northeastern corner of the mosque, is now the **Türk ve Bslam Eserleri Müzesi** (Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts: Tues–Sun 8am–noon & 1–5pm; 3TL), consisting of fifteen rooms around a pleasant garden-courtyard and housing assorted wooden, ceramic and martial knick-knacks from the province. One of the rooms is dedicated to oil wrestling (see box, p.303), including a portrait gallery of its stars, a pair of oil-wrestler's leather trousers, and blow-ups of miniatures depicting this six-hundred-year-old sport through the ages.

The main **Edirnes Müzesi** (Edirne Museum: Tues–Sun 8am–noon & 1–5pm; 5TL), the modern building just northeast of the mosque precincts, contains a predictable assortment of Greco-Roman fragments. Its ethnographic section focuses on carpet weaving and other local crafts, including colourful village bridal-wear, which preceded the bland white confectionery that's been adopted from the West.

## Muradiye Camii

Northeast of the centre, the **Muradiye Camii** (admission only at prayer times) is an easy ten-minute, down-then-up walk along Mimar Sinan Caddesi from the Selimiye Camii. According to legend, Celaleddin Rumi, founder of the Mevlevi dervish order, appeared in a dream to the pious Murat II in 1435, urging him to build a sanctuary for the Mevlevis in Edirne. The result is this pleasing, T-shaped *zaviye* (dervish convent) crouched on a hill looking north over vegetable patches and the Tunca River; the grassy entry court lends a final bucolic touch. The interior is distinguished by the best İznik tiles outside Bursa: the *mihrab* and walls up to eye level are solid with them. Higher surfaces once bore calligraphic frescoes, but these have probably been missing since the catastrophic earthquake of 1751. The dervishes initially congregated in the *eyvans* (transepts), which form the ends of the T's cross-stroke; Murat later housed them in a separate *tekke* (gathering place) in the garden.

## The Great Synagogue

Edirne, along with İstanbul, İzmir and Salonica, was a major place of refuge for Jews fleeing persecution in sixteenth-century Europe – particularly Spain. The **synagogue** here, built in 1906, has twin stair-towers and a fine Neoclassical facade. It was once the largest in the Balkans, serving a population of some 22,000. Now abandoned, it is still worth strolling south down Maarif Caddesi to have a look at it, though the old wooden houses that once housed the Jewish population have long been torn down to make way for apartment blocks.

## Along the Tunca River

At Edirne, the **Tunca River** is crossed by the greatest concentration of historic bridges in Thrace, most of them now (over) restored. The best way to see them is to take a stroll along the river parallel to the dykes and water meadows of the Tunca's right bank. Despite the litter, and the odd down-and-out that frequent the riverbanks in the evening, stretches of the river are charming – storks wade in the sluggish brown waters, frogs croak in the reeds and willows and poplars line the banks. A good place to start is at the pair furthest upstream, the fifteenth-century **Saray (Süleyman)** and **Fatih** bridges, which join the respective left and right banks of the Tunca with the river island of **Saray İçi**. The island once supported the **Edirne Sarayı**, a royal palace begun by Murat II, which was blown to bits by the Turks in 1877 to prevent the munitions stored inside from falling into Russian hands. Today, nothing is left of this pleasure pavilion except the rubble of some baths and a tower, next to which is a modern concrete stadium, venue for the Kırkpınar wrestling matches (see box, p.303).

Following the riverbank west and downstream for half an hour brings you to the double-staged **Beyazit bridge** that crosses another small island in the Tunca River. The seventeenth-century bridge is more commonly known as the Tek Göz Köprüsü ("One-eyed Bridge"), referring to its single hump. Across the bridge on the left bank is the **İkinci Beyazit Külliyesi**, built between 1484 and 1488 by Hayrettin, court architect to Beyazit II. This is the largest Ottoman spiritual and physical-welfare complex ever constructed. Within a single irregular boundary wall, and beneath a hundred-dome silhouette, are assembled a mosque, food storehouse, bakery, *imaret*, dervish hostel, medical school and insane asylum. The restoration work, which has been going on for some years, is almost complete. Except for its handsome courtyard and the sultan's loge inside, the **mosque** itself is disappointing, and more interesting is the **medical school** in the furthest northwest corner of the complex. This was conveniently linked to the *timarhane*, or madhouse, built around an open garden, which in turn leads to the magnificent **darüşşifa** (therapy centre). This hexagonal, domed structure consists of a circular central space with six *eyvans* (side-chambers) opening onto it; the inmates were brought here regularly, where musicians would play to soothe the more intractable cases. Strange five-sided rooms with fireplaces open off three of the *eyvans*. The *darüşşifa* is now home to the well-intentioned but fairly dull **Trakya University Museum of Health** (Tues–Sun 9am–7pm; 5TL), boasting a collection of old medical equipment and photographs.

Another twenty-minutes' walk south along the river will bring you to the **Gazi Mihal bridge**, an Ottoman refurbishment of a thirteenth-century Byzantine span and hence the oldest around Edirne. Gazi Mihal was a Christian nobleman who became an enthusiastic convert to Islam – hence the epithet *Gazi*, "Warrior for the Faith". His namesake mosque is at the western end of the bridge, from where it's an easy five-hundred-metre stroll back into town.

# Eating and drinking

**Restaurants** in Edirne are adequate rather than outstanding, with those in the town centre aimed at local shopkeepers and office workers, whilst some of those along the river are as much about drinking (usually *rakı* or beer) as eating. The city's speciality, **deep-fried liver**, is best tried at one of the joints behind (west) of the Semiz Ali Paşa Çarşısı.

**Ağa Köskü** **Saray Içi ⓣ0284/213 7659.** Massive, mainly outdoor restaurant on a small islet in the Tunca River, specializing in grills – but try the oven-baked lamb. Gets packed during the Kırkpınar festival. Expect to pay around 30TL per head for starters, main and a beer.

**Balkan Piliç** **Saraçlar Cad 14.** Plenty of wholesome *lokanta* fare, not just chicken but enticing vegetable dishes and good roast lamb. A plateful of various dishes will cost around 15TL.

**Köfteci Hocaoğlu** **Saraçlar Cad 73.** Dating back to 1933 but now housed in sparkling modern premises, this joint dishes up the best *köfte* in town, charcoal grilled and served with heaps of crusty bread, chopped onion, parsley and a spicy tomato sauce.

**Lalezarğ** **1.5km south of town (Karaağaç road), on the Meriç River.** Unlicensed restaurant with beautiful views of the Meriç and its elegant, honey-coloured bridge. Food – kebabs and *meze* – is substantial and reasonably priced, served in waterfront gardens. One table is located in the branches of a tree. Take the Karaağaç-bound minibus from in front of the PTT, or any red city bus heading south along Saraçlar Cad.

**London Café** **Saraçlar Cad 74.** An unexpected find, this two-storey affair (opposite the PTT) is an approximation of a London pub, with dark-wood walls and floors. There's a wide range of local imported alcoholic drinks and a non-Turkish menu including chicken schnitzel, spaghetti and burgers. It's where the town's middle-class movers and shakers come after work.

**Melek Anne Kayseri Mantası** **Maarif Cad 18.** An old detached house with a pleasant and shady garden to one side, this female-run restaurant serves up home-cooked specialities such as *mantı* (a kind of ravioli), *menemen* (scrambled omelette with tomatoes, onion and parsley), *gözleme* (a cheese-, potato- or mince-filled flatbread akin to stuffed *paratha*) and kebabs with prices ranging from 2TL for *gözleme* to 6TL for meat dishes.

**Niyazi Usta Çiğerci** **Alipaşa Orta Kapı Cad 5.** A local institution, this is the place to try strips of fried liver, best eaten with dried, fried red peppers and a bowl of *cacik* (yoghurt and garlic).

# Shopping

Etur el Sanatları Mağazasi, Saraçlar Cad 85, is a classy **handicrafts** shop, selling a vast range of high-quality products, including inlaid backgammon boards, patchwork quilts, home-made dolls and jewellery. A local speciality is *badem ezmesi* (that's **marzipan** to you and I), and a tiny but delightfully old-fashioned shop, Ezmecioğlu, Semiz Alipaşı Çarşısı 1, sells the stuff for a fraction of the price you'll pay in the upmarket outlets in İstanbul's more pretentious suburbs. Edirne is also locally known for its traditional fruit-shaped **soaps** (the watermelon slice is particularly fetching) sold in many shops in the bazaars. Also look out for some of the best **cheese** in Turkey, *Edirne Peyniri*, with a firmer texture and more delicate flavour than the standard white Turkish goat's cheese.

# Listings

**Banks and exchange** There are several banks with ATMs along Talat Paşa Cad, as well as a number of *döviz* offices on and around Hürriyet Meydanı and the Semiz Ali Paşa Çarşısı.

**Buses** From the bus station (☎0284/225 1979), several bus companies, including Kamil Koç, Varan, Volkan and Uludar Hakiki Koç, run services to İstanbul.

**Hospital** Behind the Bulgarian consulate.

**Internet access** At the café in the *Rüstem Paşa Kervansarayı*, as well as the *Eska Internet Café*, just round the corner from the hotel on Çilingirler Çarşısı, and the *Nokta Internet Café*, further down the same street opposite the *dolmuş* stand (generally daily 9am–9pm).

**Police** Karanfiloğlu Cad, behind the Üç Şerefeli Camii.

**Post office** The PTT is on Saraçlar Cad (Mon–Sat 8am–midnight for telephone and telegrams, 8am–8pm for letters, 9am–5.30pm for full postal services).

# Contexts

# Contexts

History.....311

Music.....334

Turkish cinema.....338

books.....340

# History

It may no longer be a capital, but İstanbul – the hub of two of history's greatest empires, the **Byzantine** and **Ottoman** – is one of the world's truly great cities. Given its long, glorious past, it is impossible to separate the history of the city from that of the lands it ruled, a territory which, at the height of the city's power, stretched from the Balkans to the Middle East and from the Russian steppes to the deserts of North Africa.

## Prehistory

Until recently we knew very little about the prehistory of the area on which the modern metropolis of İstanbul now stands. In 2008, however, the excavation of the Yenikapı Metro station uncovered a **Neolithic burial site**, dating back to around 6500 BC. The skeletons and pottery grave-goods, taken for safe-keeping to the Archeology Museum in nearby Sultanahmet, may have been buried beneath the homes of the deceased or formed part of a necropolis on the edge of a Neolithic settlement. This made the site at Yenikapı one of the earliest "villages" in Europe – part of a wider process whereby a sedentary, agricultural way of life spread from its source in Mesopotamia, through Anatolia and across the Bosphorus into Europe. A few finds from the **Chalcolithic period** (4500–3000 BC) have been made in the area around the Hippodrome, in the heart of Sultanahmet, along with some from the **Early Bronze Age** (3000–2000 BC) suggesting that settlement of the peninsula (the area that would be enclosed much later by the Byzantine land walls) was continuous since its **Neolithic** beginnings.

## The city of the blind

What we know of the Bronze Age, Dark Age and early Greek Archaic periods comes from **myth** and **legend** rather than archeological or source evidence. The story of Jason and the Argonauts, in which the hero Jason sets off to the land of Colchis (in the eastern Black Sea) in search of the Golden Fleece, almost certainly derives from a **major historical movement** – Greek colonization. From the mid-eighth century BC onwards, Greeks sailed north and east from the Aegean, through the Hellespont, the Sea of Marmara and Bosphorus (probably the site of the so called "clashing rocks" which almost crushed Jason's ship, the *Argo*) and up into the Black Sea, where they founded numerous colonies. The **Bosphorus**, a narrow, twenty-two-mile-long strait, became a crucial conduit linking the city-states of ancient Greece with their newly established colony in the Black Sea, and a settlement was eventually founded in the early seventh century BC on the shores of the Bosphorus, controlling the trade route between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean.

The founders, seafarers from Megara, near Athens, built their settlement, known as **Chalcedon**, on the Asian side of the strait, on the site of the modern İstanbul suburb of Kadıköy. Some twenty years later, according to Greek tradition, an adventurer called Byzas, anxious to found a new city, consulted the

### The first Bosphorus bridge

In the late sixth century BC the Persian king **Darius** ordered a bridge of boats to be built across the Bosphorus in order to facilitate troop movements and protect his supply lines in a campaign against the Scythians to the west and north of the Black Sea. According to the highly exaggerated figures of the ancient Greek historian Herodotus, some 700,000 Persian troops marched across this, the first Bosphorus bridge. Darius' expedition, which reached as far west as the Danube, is seen as the **first historic attack** by Asia on Europe, and was successful in stopping Scythian raids on the territory of the Persian Empire, which at that time spread from the banks of the Indus to the Bosphorus. Remarkably, the feat was not to be repeated until 1974, with the opening of the first Bosphorus suspension bridge.

Delphic Oracle, and the priestess told him to build his new city "opposite the land of the blind". It was a typically cryptic reply and Byzas set out for the Black Sea having no idea what was meant. However, when he reached the Bosphorus he realized that the founders of Chalcedon had been "blind" not to notice that the peninsula opposite them, in Europe, was strategically a far better place for a settlement. Built on the top of a hill at the tip of the naturally defensible triangular peninsula, **Byzantium** commanded the passage both up and across the Bosphorus, had a natural deep-water harbour and defence in the inlet now known as the **Golden Horn** to the north, and only a narrow neck of land to defend against any possible enemy approaching from the west.

Perhaps inevitably, this enviable location was coveted by the great powers of the day, and King Darius of **Persia** eventually absorbed Byzantium into his empire towards the end of the sixth century BC as part of his campaigns against the Scythians and the Greeks (see box above).



# The classical era

By the end of the sixth century BC the Persians had absorbed the Greek cities of Asia Minor and the Hellespont region into their empire. Usually they installed tyrants to keep control and this, allied with heavy taxation, caused increasing resentment amongst the independently minded inhabitants. When the powerful city-state of **Athens** was drawn into aiding the Greek cities of Asia Minor in their revolt against Persian rule at the beginning of the fifth century, the incensed Darius was even more determined to conquer mainland Greece. But following his defeat at Marathon in 490 BC and his successor Xerxes' reverses at Thermopylae and Salamis in 480 BC, then Plataea in 479 BC, the Persians abandoned their efforts to push west. The **Spartan** general Pausanias, who had led the victorious Greek forces at Plataea, was put in charge of a Greek fleet and in 478 BC captured Byzantium from the Persians.

## Athens, Sparta and Alexander the Great

The inhabitants of the city, now free from the Persian yoke, were soon caught up in the conflict between the two superpowers of the Classical Greek world, **Athens** and **Sparta**. The city soon became part of Athens' Delian League, its prosperity shown by the high tributes it paid to the league's coffers, a wealth based largely on its control of the grain trade from the Black Sea to the

Mediterranean. Towards the end of the fifth century BC the city switched sides, cutting off the grain supply to Athens and helping ensure Sparta's victory in the long-running **Peloponnesian War**.

Opportunist Byzantium switched sides again in the fourth century BC, before rebelling in 356 BC and gaining its **independence**. In 340 BC, with Athens' star on the wane, the newly emerging power of Macedonia threatened from the west. According to legend, the besieged city was saved when the army of King Philip II of Macedon, attempting to force the city under cover of darkness, were illuminated by a miraculous waxing of the moon. The superstitious inhabitants praised the moon goddess **Hecate** for their salvation and began using her symbol, the star and crescent moon, on their **coinage** – a symbol adopted by Christian Byzantium many centuries later. When Philip's successor, **Alexander**, marched east to take on the mighty Persian Empire in 334 BC, rather than risk valuable men besieging Byzantium, he simply bypassed it and crossed the Hellespont (modern Dardanelles) into Asia. Following his famous victory against the Persians at the battle of Granicus, Byzantium threw open its gates. As a reward it was allowed to keep its independence, though it was compelled to acknowledge Macedonian overlordship.

## The advent of Rome

During the early Hellenistic period the city suffered repeated **Scythian attacks** and, desperately needing to fund its war chest, was forced to raise the levy it charged on ships passing through the Bosphorus. In 220 BC this provoked a war with Rhodes, which Byzantium lost. Then, as the Romans moved eastward in the second century BC, first into Greece and then Asia Minor, the city negotiated terms with the Roman Republic, keeping its **autonomy** in return for payment of an annual tribute. By AD 79, however, the republic had become an **empire**, and Byzantium lost its privileges. Yet far worse was in store. Following the murder of the Emperor Pertinax in AD 193, a power struggle broke out between Pescennius Niger and Septimius Severus as to who would succeed him. Byzantium backed the loser and the victorious Severus laid siege to the city. After three years resistance, Byzantium fell and a vengeful Severus razed the city to the ground and put most of its inhabitants to the sword.

The site of Byzantium was too strategically and commercially valuable to leave vacant and, within a few years, Severus ordered the city to be rebuilt. The land walls of the city followed a new line, west of the original, doubling the area of land formerly occupied by the old Byzantium. Severus renamed the new city **Antoninia** and ordered the construction of three glorious temples to Apollo, Artemis and Aphrodite on the hilltop around where the Aya Sofya and Topkapı Palace now stand.

The new Byzantium prospered quietly, but during the early part of the fourth century it was well and truly thrust into the limelight. In AD 284 the Emperor **Diocletian**, in an effort to sort out the administrative problems of running a huge and unwieldy domain, divided the empire into two parts, each ruled by an emperor (or *Augustus*) and a junior ruler (or *Caesar*). This so-called **tetrarchy** was unworkable from the start, the idea of dynastic succession clashing with the merit-based system envisaged by Diocletian, and **civil war** ensued. The ruler of the western part of the empire, **Constantine**, defeated his rival **Licinius**, the emperor of the east, near Chrysopolis, on the Asian side of the Bosphorus in 324. Constantine, now sole ruler of the whole Roman Empire, was impressed with the superb location of Byzantium, just across the strait from the scene of the final battle, and commemorated his victory by founding it as the new imperial **capital**.

## New Rome to Constantinople

Much work needed to be done to make the old city a worthy imperial capital. The **rebuilding** began in 326, with the city walls moved further westward yet again, enclosing an area some five times larger than the Antoninia of Septimius Severus. Work continued for four years, during which time the **Hippodrome** (an arena used for games and court ceremonies) and forum were enlarged, an imperial palace and large public baths were built. Constantine followed **tradition** and ordered works of art from around the empire to be brought to glorify his new capital, including the Serpentine Column from the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, now in the **Hippodrome**. Then, in the May of 330, during a grand ceremony in the Hippodrome, Constantine named the old Byzantium Nova Roma or the "New Rome", though it soon came to be known as Constantinopolis (Constantinople) or "The City of Constantine".

# The Byzantine Empire

Under Constantine, Christianity moved from persecuted faith to official religion (see box below). In 392, Emperor **Theodosius I** took things a stage further, banning **paganism** and ordering the demolition of all pagan temples, a move effectively making the whole Roman Empire a Christian one. In 395, following the death of Theodosius I, the empire was divided by his two sons, with **Honorius** ruling the west from Rome and **Arcadius** the east from Constantinople. While the western part of the empire struggled to survive the invasion of the **Vandals** and **Goths**, Constantinople and the eastern half generally prospered. In 413, during the reign of Emperor Theodosius II, the land walls of the city were rebuilt a couple of kilometres further west again than those of Constantine. On a pragmatic level the walls were needed to contain the growing population of the city and to withstand the threat of Attila the Hun; on a symbolic one they meant the city now incorporated seven hills, just like Rome. Although an **earthquake** caused the walls to tumble in 477, they were quickly rebuilt along the same lines. Theodosius II also ordered the construction of a monumental new church, the Aya Sofya.

In 476, Rome to fell to the Goths, and **Constantinople** once again became the capital of an (admittedly much reduced) empire. The collapse of the western part of the empire also marked a significant change in the nature of the eastern half, which developed an ever more distinct Greek and Christian – or Byzantine – character.

### Constantine and Christianity

Scholars still debate the date that Constantine fully embraced **Christianity**. In the **Edict of Milan**, issued in 313, he and his then co-ruler Licinius announced that this hitherto much persecuted faith was to be tolerated. His mother Helena, a devout Christian herself, no doubt exerted great influence over her son's beliefs and he was certainly attracted to the religion, though it seems he wasn't baptized until near his death in 337. Constantine had previously established his control of the Christian Church at the ecumenical **Council of Nicaea** in 325, when he ensured that the emperor was both head of state and head of the Church. Christianity, officially sanctioned and state-controlled, became the dominant faith of the Roman Empire, and many churches were built within the confines of the new city walls.

## Imperial expansion, artistic expression

Six emperors ruled between the death of Theodosius in 450 and the accession of the greatest of all Byzantine emperors, **Justinian** (527–565) – a period which saw increased tension between Rome and Constantinople over papal supremacy. Justinian's prospects were, initially at least, rather dim. The Sassanid Persians threatened from the eastern borders of the empire and Justinian's great general, Belisarius, after some initial success, suffered an ignominious reverse in 531, after which the Byzantines were forced to pay a heavy tribute to ensure **peace**. Then, in 532, events at the heart of the empire almost led to disaster. Supporters of the two factions at the Hippodrome, the **Blues** and the **Greens**, named after the strip the rival charioteers wore, rioted in the streets of the capital. When Justinian ordered the execution of the ringleaders, the enraged mob turned its wrath on the emperor himself. Fortunately for him, the brilliant Belisarius was in the capital and not on campaign and he soon restored order, butchering 30,000 of the most recalcitrant rioters in the process.

The damage caused in the so-called **Nika riots** gave Justinian a good excuse to glorify both himself and his imperial capital and, in the massive building spree that followed, the most magnificent structure erected was the **Hagia Sophia**, the Church of the Holy Wisdom, since converted into a mosque and the name Turkicized to Aya Sofya. Other ecclesiastical buildings included the exquisite **Church of Sergius and Bacchus** (today's Küçük Aya Sofya) and the **Hagia İrini** (Aya İrene), along with the rather more pragmatic **Basilica Cistern** (Yerebatan Sarnıçı), which helped secure the capital's water supply.

Constantinople was now one of the greatest cities in the world. It sat proudly at the centre of a revived empire, with Belisarius leading campaigns resulting in the re-conquest of much of the western part of the empire, including Italy, southern Spain and North Africa. The magnificence of Justinan's reign did not prevent his court historian, **Procopius**, from dishing up plenty of dirt on the emperor and his wife, a former prostitute who apparently danced publicly in the nude and encouraged geese to peck bread from her pubic hair.

## Barbarians at the gate

In the centuries following the **death** of Justinian, the citizens of Constantinople had much cause to thank their city's natural defences and mighty walls. From the north came the Slavs and Avars, while the Serbs and Bulgars pressed from the northwest. The danger from the Sassanid Persians to the east, though, was even greater. Having taken Syria, Palestine, Egypt and much of North Africa from the Byzantines early in the reign of the Emperor **Heraclius** (610–641) they soon swept across Anatolia to reach the shores of the Bosphorus at Chalcedon, opposite Constantinople. Fortunately Heraclius was made of stern stuff and, taking command of a Byzantine army (the first emperor to do so since Theodosius I), he marched east and eventually defeated the Sassanians so thoroughly that they never recovered.

His work was soon undone. The armies of the new religion of **Islam** swept out of Arabia around 637 and all that Heraclius had won was lost to the Muslims. By 674 the **Arab armies** were at the gates of Constantinople, only to be repulsed by a formidable new weapon invented by the **Byzantines** and whose exact recipe is unknown to this day – Greek fire. This lethal substance could burn on water, and was used to great effect by the Byzantines, especially in naval battles. The Arab armies, however, kept coming and it wasn't until they were repulsed from the city in 718 that the threat finally ended.

### Iconoclasm

Theological debate was very much a feature of the Byzantine Empire and in the eighth century a dispute arose over the use of images and icons. The **iconoclasts**, possibly influenced by similar prohibitions in Judaism and Islam, believed that figurative images, particularly of Christ and the saints, should not be venerated. Emperor **Leo III** (717–41) gave the movement official sanction when, in 726, he ordered the removal of a large gold icon of Christ from one of the doors of Justinian's palace. Opponents of the movement **rioted** in the streets, but this did not stop the iconoclasts, who ransacked churches and monasteries across the empire. Many wonderful works of religious art were destroyed during this period and Byzantine society was riven apart. The **Council of Nicaea**, held in 787, ruled that icon worship was now permissible, but the dispute continued on until 847, further weakening an empire now beset by a new and more tangible threat, the Bulgars.

Having saved themselves from the Muslim Arabs, the Christian inhabitants of the empire did their best to destroy themselves. Debates over **icon worship** (see box above) resulted in vandalism and riots and destabilized church and state for over a century. Yet despite all these problems, the Byzantine Empire endured. The Bulgars were repulsed twice by the land walls of Theodosius in the ninth and tenth centuries and, within the walls, the capital enjoyed a brief **artistic revival**. In 1014 Emperor Basil II (976–1025), the "Bulgar Slayer", finally put an end to the **Bulgar menace** and incorporated their lands into the empire – though not before blinding fifteen thousand prisoners captured during the decisive battle. In 1054 the long-running disputes between Rome and Constantinople, stemming from doctrinal differences and competing claims as to who had authority over the Greek churches of southern Italy, resulted in a final schism between the **Catholic** and **Orthodox** churches. The Patriarch of Constantinople, despite being declared a heretic by the **pope**, was now more powerful than ever in the east.



# The coming of the Turks

Having already lost land in the northwest to the Bulgars and much territory in the east of the empire to the Arabs, a new **Muslim** threat to the Byzantine Empire, the Turks, emerged in Anatolia. Originating from Central Asia, from the eighth century onwards these nomadic tribal peoples moved westwards in search of new pastures. Originally shamanists, by the end of the ninth century many had **converted** to Islam following their encounters with the Arabs. In 1071 one branch of these Turkic tribes, the **Selçuks**, met and decisively defeated the Byzantine army of Emperor Romanos IV Diogenes (1067–1071) at Manzikert, near **Lake Van** in eastern Anatolia. Diogenes was captured and the victors swept into Anatolia, finally establishing their capital at Konya in Central **Anatolia**. Although the Byzantines did manage to recapture some lost territory, the empire was much reduced.

## The crusades

Luckily for the Byzantines, the Muslim Selçuk Turks seemed happy enough to leave the magnificent imperial capital alone. Instead it was fellow

Christians, the **Crusaders**, who brought the city to its knees. The First Crusade passed through Anatolia en route to the Holy Land in 1097 without any problem, but in 1175, during the Second Crusade, Frederick Barbarossa encouraged the Selçuks to launch an attack against the Byzantines. The two armies met at **Myriokephalo** in 1176, with the Selçuks decisive victors. For the Byzantines it was a disastrous defeat, which was quickly followed by the Balkan states, fed up with ever-increasing taxation, seceding from the empire. Worse was to come, as in 1185 the **Normans** captured and sacked the empire's second city, **Salonica**. The writing was on the wall for Constantinople, despite the fact that the Normans were defeated before they reached the capital. On the Third Crusade in 1187, the invaders took Edirne, some 300 kilometres east of Constantinople, on their way to the Holy Land, causing great alarm in the city.

Emperor **Alexius III** (1195–1203) came to power by deposing his brother, **Isaac II** (1185–1195). Isaac's son Alexius sought aid from the west to reinstate his father – a pretext the loot- and power-hungry Crusaders were only too happy to seize upon. The Fourth Crusade started in 1201, with the avowed aim of capturing Constantinople – a plan backed by the **Doge of Venice**, who hoped to increase his city's trade by eliminating its eastern rival. In 1203 the Crusaders took **Galata**, on the north side of the Golden Horn. They now held a strategic position from which to attack the city without having to penetrate the mighty land walls. Alexius III fled the capital, taking the imperial treasury with him, and **Isaac II** regained the throne, though as he had been blinded on his deposition by Alexius III, Isaac's son and co-emperor **Alexius IV** (1203–1204) was the effective ruler. He was less than popular though, as his overtures to the west had resulted in the Crusaders turning their attention to **Constantinople** and, in January 1204 the populace revolted and deposed him.

It was left to the new emperor, **Alexius V** (1204), to face the Crusaders. On April 13, the besieging forces penetrated the less formidable sea walls running along the south shore of the Golden Horn and poured into the capital. The Byzantines' wealth – accrued from their extensive domains – and culture – derived from a fusion of the glories of ancient Greece and Rome and the precepts of Christianity – had long been coveted by the Latin Crusaders. Motivated by resentment and greed, they ransacked the city. The artistic treasures and religious relics that had been amassed over the centuries were shipped west or simply destroyed and Alexius V was forced to jump to his death from atop the **column of Arcadius**.

Rule of what was left of the imperial capital was shared between **Count Baldwin** of Flanders and Dandolo, the **Doge of Venice**. The Byzantine Empire was not yet ready to fold, though. A new capital arose in **Nicaea** (modern İznik) on the south side of the Sea of Marmara. In 1261 its then emperor, **Michael VIII Palaeologos** (1261–1282), took Constantinople from the Latins and was crowned for a second time in the church of Hagia Sophia – effectively restoring the Byzantine Empire.

With the Latins no longer threatening from the west, and any ideas the Selçuk Turks may have entertained about westward expansion from their power-base in Anatolia checked by rampaging Mongol armies sweeping in from the northeast, the Byzantine Empire, despite its much-reduced size and status, underwent a mini-renaissance. This is seen most obviously in the wonderful early fourteenth-century frescoes and mosaics in the Church of **St Saviour** in Chora (now the Kariye Camii) out near the land walls.

## The rise of the Ottomans

The **Ottomans**, like their **Selçuk kin**, hailed originally from Central Asia and were Muslim. By the late thirteenth century this semi-nomadic, Turkish tribal grouping had settled in Phrygia, in northwest **Anatolia**. Their leader was a certain Osman, and his followers were known as Osmanlı, later westernized into "Ottoman". Within a few years, Gazi ("warrior of the faith") Osman had extended the boundaries of his territory both to the east and the north. In 1326 his son and successor, Orhan, captured the important Byzantine city of Proussa (modern Bursa). Orhan took on the title **sultan** and made Bursa capital of his mini-empire, marking the transition of the Ottomans from semi-nomadic pastoralists to a settled people with a state of their own. Orhan continued Ottoman expansion, largely at the expense of the Byzantines, taking Nicaea (İznik), Nicomedia (İzmit) and then Chrysopolis (Üsküdar), right opposite Constantinople on the Asian side of the Bosphorus.

The next sultan, **Murat** I (1360–1389), captured Adrianople (Edirne) in 1371. Later he took Ottoman arms into the heart of the Balkans, conquering Thrace, Macedonia, Bulgaria and Serbia. The Ottomans also battled with their Muslim and Turkish kin and, in a campaign against the Muslim Karaman dynasty in western Asia Minor, actually used Christian mercenaries in their army. By the time of Murat I's successor **Beyazit I** (1389–1403), the Byzantine Empire was little more than a rump state. Beyazit, known as Yıldırım or "Lightning" for the speed of his military campaigns, besieged Constantinople in 1394 but, thanks to its near-impregnable land walls, it survived. The inhabitants of the city could not, however, prevent the Ottomans building the fortress of **Anadolu Hisarı** on the Asian banks of the Bosphorus, just a few kilometres north of the city in 1397, giving them control of trade through the strait. The Ottoman conquest of the city had an air of inevitability about it, but the arrival in Anatolia of the Mongol warlord Tamerlane, who routed Beyazit's army at the Battle of Ankara in 1402, gave the **Byzantine Empire** a fifty-year reprieve. Beyazit was caged for a year before meeting his end and to make matters worse his four sons warred over the accession. Fortunately for the Ottomans, Tamerlane died in 1405 and **Mongol** power waned. The Ottoman Empire, reunited by **Mehmet I** (1413–21), resumed its expansion in the reign of his successor, **Murat II** (1421–51).

## The fall of Constantinople

Weakened by the continual loss of territory and numerous sieges, the fall of **Constantinople**, known by the inhabitants of the Byzantine Empire and many beyond simply as "The Polis" (City) – as if there were no other – was inevitable. Constantinople, both symbolically and strategically, was far too important not to be brought under Ottoman control. **Mehmet II** (1451–81), planned the siege meticulously. First he ordered the construction of the **Rumeli Hisarı**, a fortress on the European side of the Bosphorus directly opposite the Anadolu Hisarı erected back in 1397 by his grandfather **Beyazit I**. The Ottomans now had control of traffic through the Bosphorus and completely blocked access to the city from the Black Sea. As the city was surrounded on three sides by water, he enlarged and outfitted a large fleet, which he placed in the Sea of Marmara to block access to the enemy from the south. Well aware of the number of times past sieges had foundered on the mighty land walls, he employed artillery and ballistics experts from Europe and then massed his land forces against the walls.

The defenders of Constantinople, led by the Emperor **Constantine XI** (1449–53), mobilized as best they could for the defence of their beleaguered city,

### The Byzantine legacy

The **Byzantine legacy** is a considerable one. For over a millennia this cosmopolitan, polyglot Christian empire kept the armies of Islam from Western Europe. Educated and civilized, its scholars and scribes copied and preserved Classical texts that might otherwise have been lost, arguably paving the way for the **Renaissance**. In terms of art and architecture its achievements were remarkable, particularly in the ecclesiastical field, with the innovative **Hagia Sophia** the inspiration for countless churches across the Orthodox world. Despite the various theological disputes that threatened to bring the empire to its knees on occasion, its capital, Constantinople, was a beacon of Christianity, and even today the city is the spiritual centre of Orthodox Christianity.

manning the walls with troops, including their Italian allies, and stretching a huge chain across the mouth of the Golden Horn to prevent the entry of Ottoman ships. When the siege began, in February 1453, Mehmet II outsmarted the defenders by building a trail over the hills of **Galata** and rolling his ships down it to the Golden Horn above the chain, causing great consternation in the city. Batteries of Ottoman artillery, including the mighty **Orban**, the largest cannon ever built, pounded the land walls mercilessly. For seven long weeks the 7,000 defenders held out against some 60,000 Ottoman troops, but their resistance was futile. On May 29 Ottoman cannon breached the land walls between the Topkapı and Edirnekapı gates and the attackers poured in. Constantine XI, the last Byzantine emperor, perished in hand-to-hand combat on the walls, though his body remained unidentified amongst the slain. The Turks raced through the streets of the fallen city to the Hagia Sophia. Here, according to legend, the Patriarch, celebrating mass, disappeared into the church walls and will not reappear until the city is back in **Greek hands**.



## The Ottoman Empire

**Sultan Mehmet** was determined to make the city a worthy new hub for his already far-flung empire, though the city did not actually usurp **Edirne** as capital until the reign of **Selim I** (1512–20). Now entitled Fatih, or "Conqueror" Mehmet, he boosted the shattered population of the city by bringing in both Muslims and Christians (mainly Greeks and Armenians) from rural areas of the empire and instituting the long-lasting millet or "nation" system (see box, p.320). He then set about restoring what had been neglected during the Byzantine Empire's years of decline, and rebuilding that which had been destroyed in the siege and subsequent sack of the city, especially the roads, the sewers and the water system. The **Topkapı Palace** was built within a few years of the conquest, just to the south of the Hagia Sophia, which of course, was itself turned into a mosque, the **Aya Sofya**. The magnificent Fatih Camii or "Mosque of the Conqueror", with its associated hospital, theological school and soup kitchens, was typical of the many mosque complexes built across the city, where worship and philanthropy went hand in hand. The city walls were rebuilt, including the massive fortification of **Yedikule**, though the Genoese, pardoned by Fatih Mehmet for helping in the defence of Constantinople, had to take down the walls surrounding their enclave in **Galata**.

## İstanbul or Constaninople?

The Ottomans were quite happy to keep the city's old name, **Constantinople**, albeit in the Turkicized form of "Konstantiniyye". This was, however, used alongside a new name, **İstanbul**, itself a corruption of the Greek *eis tin polin* or "to the city". The city was also known as **Islamboul** or "Full of Islam", a pious pun on the name İstanbul and, more rarely, **Dersaadet** or "Abode of Felicity". The name of the city wasn't changed officially until 1930, when the new Republic deemed "Constantinople" reactionary and imperialist.

# Expansion

**Mehmet** was not content with rebuilding the city. The loyal janissary corps (see box below), ably supplemented by regular forces made up of conscripts rewarded with grants of land at the end of their service, made the Ottoman **military machine** the envy of the age. The empire expanded at a faster rate than ever, with the addition of most of what is now Greece, Albania, the majority of Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina in the west, the southern Black Sea coast to the northeast and Rhodes in the Aegean. **Toleration** of the customs and faiths of its subjects helped prevent rebellion, and effective **administration** meant the empire ran relatively smoothly, with the sultan's domains divided into a number of easily regulated districts, trade and industry encouraged (to the extent of granting trading rights to potential rivals such as the Venetians and Genoese) and taxes levied efficiently.

**Beyazit II** (1481–1512) improved the Ottoman fleet to such an extent that it was able to overtake Venice as the leading naval power in the Mediterranean, but was forced to abdicate by his own son, **Selim I** (1512–1520). An orthodox Sunni Muslim, Selim's immediate concern was his Shi'ite neighbour **Shah İsmail** of Persia. Islam had split into these two competing groups following a dispute over who was the rightful successor to the Prophet Mohammed, with the majority (later known as Sunnis) convinced the successor should be chosen from the community of Muslims, a minority (who became known as Shi'ites)

## Infidels in the Empire

The Ottoman army had included **janissaries** in its ranks since the fourteenth century. This elite body was made up of Christian boys taken from their families, converted to Islam, and given the best military training. Other **non-Muslims** were barred from military service.

Indeed, the strict distinctions in the Ottoman world meant infidels were officially second-class citizens, known as "**rayah**" or cattle. This **millet** or "nation" system allowed the non-Muslim inhabitants of the empire (largely Armenian, Greek and Slav Christians and Jews), a fair degree of autonomy in return for paying their taxes. In spite of its apparent iniquities the system worked, with non-Muslim communities given a great deal of autonomy, and compared with the treatment of the Jews in Europe at the time, for example, the non-Muslim population of the empire was well off. Indeed, towards the end of the fifteenth century, the Ottomans sent "**mercy ships**" to the Iberian peninsula to collect and bring back to the empire the Jews persecuted and finally expelled by Spain and Portugal – many of whom eventually made their way to İstanbul and contributed greatly to the city's economic success. The Ottoman Empire may have been ruled by Muslims, but it was multi-ethnic, multi-faith and, for the period, very tolerant.

believing he must come from Mohammed's family. İsmail was starting to promote Shi'ism both within and without his empire, encouraging the Shi'ite population of Anatolia to question Selim's rule. The sultan took no chances and butchered 40,000 Shi'ites in Anatolia before heading east to defeat the Shah in the battle of **Çaldıran** in 1514, a victory which sealed the eastern border of the Ottoman Empire – and still forms, more or less, the modern frontier between Turkey and Iran. Selim then turned south and conquered **Mesopotamia**, **Syria** and **Egypt**. Crucially, Mecca and Medina, the two holy cities of Islam, now fell under Ottoman control, as did the spiritual leader of the Islamic world, the **caliph**. From now on, Ottoman rulers saw themselves as both sultan and caliph and were able to promote themselves and their causes on both a temporal and a spiritual plane.

**Selim I**, known in the west as the Selim "the Grim" for his severe manner and bigotry, was succeeded in 1520 by his son **Süleyman** (1520–66), a ruler with the rather more pleasing sobriquet "the Magnificent". Under his rule, the empire pushed its boundaries far into Europe. In 1529 the Turks caused the continent to quake by reaching the gates of **Vienna**, and until the failure of the siege of **Malta** in 1565 the Mediterranean was more or less an Ottoman lake. Arguably the leading world power of the sixteenth century, the Ottomans used the revenue raised from their military successes to glorify their great capital, **İstanbul**. Süleyman was blessed in having at his disposal the greatest architect of the Ottoman era, **Sinan**, who was equally blessed to be living and working at a time when the empire's coffers were overflowing. His İstanbul masterpiece, rivalled only by his **Selimiye Camii** in the former Ottoman capital of Edirne, was the **Süleymaniye** mosque complex, which still dominates the skyline of the city, especially when viewed from across the Golden Horn in Galata.

## The rot sets in

Süleyman's reign is rightly seen as a **golden age** – especially when compared to a Western Europe of small kingdoms engaged in petty squabbles. The empire stretched from the Balkans in the west to the Persian border in the east and from the steppes of Russia south into Lower Egypt, had an imperial treasury capable of funding magnificent works of architecture and was governed by an able administrator and legislator. Yet the seeds of decline were already taking root.

Although earlier Sultans had married, often expediently to princesses from neighbouring Muslim or Christian dynasties, **Süleyman** broke Ottoman precedent by wedding his favourite concubine, **Roxelana**. Scheming and manipulative, she ensured the succession of her first-born son, the weak and ineffectual **Selim II** (1566–74), and persuaded Süleyman to move the *harem* into the grounds of the Topkapı Palace. Under Selim II, Topkapı became a pleasure palace and the sultan was more than happy to indulge himself – not for nothing was he known in the west as "Selim the Sot".

Selim II's rule set a precedent that successive sultans were to follow, and they became increasingly **detached** from the reality of ruling the empire. **Corruption** inevitably set in, with the women of the Harem, especially the mothers of sultans or favourite concubines, as well as unscrupulous grand viziers, pulling the strings. The introduction of the **Kafes** or "Cage" under **Ahmet I** (1603–17), in which the heirs apparent were incarcerated in a suite of rooms in the Harem until it was their turn to take the throne, may have been less brutal than the earlier custom of fratricide (**Murat III** had his five brothers put to death on his accession to the throne in 1574), but underlined the sultans' isolation.

Ahmet I was responsible for İstanbul's famous **Sultan Ahmet Camii**, better known in the west as the Blue Mosque, but elsewhere the empire was stagnating. The **janissary corps** was becoming bloated, rising from some 12,000 under Mehmet II to 200,000 by the mid-seventeenth century. Rather than being an elite recruited from the empire's Christian population, membership was now handed down from father to son, effectively making the corps Muslim. Further easing of restrictions on membership allowed free Muslims to join the corps. Most had no military background and no intention of attaining one – their only interest was to collect their pay and extort cash from the defenceless peasantry, or even from the sultans themselves.

This corruption and nepotism was compounded by external pressures, with a Europe revitalized by the **Renaissance** now looking with renewed interest at Ottoman domains. In 1536 the **French** signed a treaty with the empire involving various trading advantages but, more worryingly, giving French nationals **exemption** from Ottoman taxes and the right to be judged by their own consuls under foreign law. The privileges offered to the French, and then to other European nations and even companies, became known as the **Capitulations**. They helped undermine Ottoman sovereignty and increased Muslim resentment against the empire's Christians, many of whom became employees of the European traders and were given the same rights and privileges as their foreign employers.

In 1571, a Christian force led by **Don John** of Austria, put together under the pope's auspices to reduce Ottoman power in the Mediterranean, defeated the Ottoman fleet at Lepanto. Although not disastrous in itself, the battle proved that the Ottomans were not invincible and put paid to further expansion in Europe for some time. The late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries saw the Ottomans battling the **Persians** on their eastern frontier, ending with the loss of Baghdad to Shah Abbas I in 1624. **Murat IV** (1623–1640) proved more able than his predecessors and was the first ruler since Süleyman the Magnificent to personally lead his troops to war, culminating in the retaking of Baghdad in 1638. But Murat died at the age of thirty and the rate of decline began to accelerate. In 1656 the janissaries staged a major **rebellion**, hanging a number of leading officials outside the Blue Mosque in their anger at receiving their pay in copper, whilst in eastern Anatolia local warlords challenged Ottoman authority. The population of the empire more than doubled (from around twelve million to twenty-five or thirty million between 1525 and 1600) and landless **peasants** streamed into İstanbul and other urban centres, putting more pressure on the system.

Efforts to **expand** into Europe proved disastrous. Following several defeats at the hands of the Austrians, the Turks suffered a humiliating defeat whilst attempting to take Vienna in 1683, losing an entire army in the process. The empire lost Hungary and other territory in Eastern Europe, though the treaties of Carlowitz (1699) and Passarowitz (1718) did stabilize the **Balkan frontier**.

## An era of reform

At the turn of the eighteenth century, the Ottoman Empire did what all empires do once they stop expanding – it declined. Yet **İstanbul**, far from the troublesome frontiers and with a stranglehold over the empire's finances, remained a city of splendour. **Sultan Ahmet III** (1703–30) and his able grand vizier İbrahim Paşa, both much influenced by European (especially French) arts and culture, oversaw something of a **renaissance** in the capital during the so-called **Tulip Period**. The Fountain of Sultan Ahmet III, outside of the Topkapı

Palace, is a good example of Baroque influence on Ottoman architecture in this period. More importantly, Ahmet set up the first press to print **books** in Ottoman Turkish. He also imported thousands of **tulip** bulbs from Holland and Persia, planting them in the palace gardens and illuminating them at night by roving tortoises with candles fixed to their shells.

Outside the capital, life was less frivolous. **Russia** had its eyes fixed firmly on Ottoman territory, especially the Bosphorus, control of which would give them crucial access from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. The Ottomans suffered several reverses, notably off the **Aegean island** of Chios in 1771, and in 1779 they lost the **Crimea**. Russian interference in Ottoman affairs, often under the pretext of protecting the rights of the sultan's Greek Orthodox Christian subjects, would run until the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 put a (temporary) end to Russian imperialism.

A much earlier **revolution**, that of France in 1789, was to have an enormous impact on the ailing Ottoman Empire. **Selim III** (1789–1807) came to the throne in the same year, and set out to reform the empire on Western, liberal lines. His efforts were, however, resisted by the janissaries, who forced him to dissolve his new force before rebelling and finally **murdering** the sultan. His successor, **Mahmut II** (1808–39), realized he would have to take things more slowly if he were to succeed in reforming the near-moribund institutions of the Ottoman state. He had a lucky break in 1812, when Napoleon's invasion of Russia compelled the **Tsar** to sign a **peace treaty** favourable to the Ottomans; he was less lucky in 1821 when a full-scale **rebellion** broke out in Greece. The revolt, which ended in 1830 with the formation of an independent Greek state, marked the beginning of the end for the cosmopolitan Ottoman world, as ethnic groupings from the Balkans to the Middle East sought to break away from the empire – including **Egypt**, which seceded in 1838.

In the capital, Mahmut II fared rather better. Like Selim III, he founded a new, **Western-style army**, but unlike his predecessor he managed to suppress the inevitable janissary revolt in 1826. Appropriately, it was the new professionally trained troops who crushed the ill-disciplined janissaries, bombarding their barracks and leaving the Hippodrome piled high with their dead. Not content with quelling the revolt, Mahmut disbanded the old elite corps and banned their supporters, the reactionary Bektaşi dervish order. Prussian and Austrian advisers were brought in to train his new army, and a military academy and medical school founded, with French as the language of instruction. In a further bid to catch up with Western Europe, Mahmut introduced formal **civil and foreign services**, insisted that all but clerics must wear Western-style clothing and replaced the "oriental" turban with the **fez**.

## The sick man of Europe

**Sultan Abdülmecid** (1839–61) was quick to build on the modernization programme of his predecessor, heralding an era of change known as the **Tanzimat** (Reorganization or Reform in Turkish). The Tanzimat Fermanı (Reform Decree) set out the changes needed to revitalize the moribund empire. These included the devolving of some of the sultan's powers to advisers, attempts to end taxation irregularities and the reorganization of the finance system and Civil and Military code on the French model. Most important, and certainly far more controversial, was the declaration of full **equality** between the empire's Muslim and non-Muslim inhabitants, including Turks, Kurds, Armenians, Greeks, Jews and Circassians. The sultan further distanced himself from the past by moving his abode across

the Golden Horn, from the Topkapı Palace to the grandiose European-style **Dolmabaçhe Palace**.

The empire also began to experience something of an **economic revival** that continued through the nineteenth century and manifested itself in the capital by a wide variety of civic and commercial projects. Heading these, amongst many other positive developments, was the formation of the Ottoman Steamship Company in 1851, the construction of the Tünel underground funicular railway in Galata, the setting up of the British-funded Ottoman Bank, the construction of a bridge across the Golden Horn and the introduction of a **postal service**. Pera and Galata (today's Beyoğlu), inhabited mainly by foreigners and the city's Christian and Jewish minorities, underwent a **building boom**. European-style apartment blocks, music halls, cafés, bars and restaurants lined the streets, especially the Grande Rue de Pera (today's İstiklal Caddesi). Modern hotels, notably the Pera Palace, sprang up in what is now Beyoğlu, catering to the influx of tourists from Europe, a stream that became a flood when the **Orient Express** began disgorging its affluent passengers at newly built Sirkeci station in 1883.

Unfortunately, Abdülmecid's extravagance plunged the Ottoman state into **debt**, and traditional bazaar craftsmen were decimated by the industrially produced goods that flooded in from Western Europe. The Tanzimat reforms also alienated many Muslims, who resented the new-found equality of the Christians and Jews, especially as the European traders had favoured the Greek, Armenian and Jewish minorities over the Muslim majority since the Capitulations that had begun back in the sixteenth century. To make matters worse for the Muslims, the empire's Christian minorities now had the right and the funds to build places of worship and shiny new **churches**, largely Armenian Apostolic and Greek Orthodox, sprang up across the capital.

Had the Ottoman Empire been left alone to sort out its internal problems, things might have turned out differently. As it was, the empire became embroiled in the machinations of **Britain**, **France** and **Russia**. In 1853 **Tsar Nicholas I** said of the ailing empire "We have a sick man on our hands – a man gravely ill. It will be a grave misfortune if one of these days he slips through our hands", a clear indication of Russian designs on Ottoman territory. The **Crimean War** of 1853–56 began with an argument between Russia and France over the protection to be extended by each to, respectively, the Orthodox and Catholic churches in Ottoman **Palestine**. In the end Russia demanded the right to "protect" all the Ottoman Empire's Orthodox Christian subjects. Determined to prevent Russia getting its hands on Ottoman territory, Britain and France backed the sultan. The war ended, more or less, in a stalemate, though one side effect was to bring **Florence Nightingale** to the massive Selimiye Barracks on the Asian side of the Bosphorus in Üsküdar. Her work in the hospital there, mainly looking after wounded and sick soldiers brought down from the Crimea, established the principles of modern nursing.

## Young Ottomans to Young Turks

Emboldened by the Tanzimat reforms, a new, liberal elite, the **Society of Young Ottomans**, sprang up in the reign of **Abdülaziz** (1861–76). Educated at the secular schools introduced in the reign of Abdülmecid and influenced by Western European political thought, this elite sought a constitutional monarchy. Less liberally inclined than his predecessor, Abdülaziz was not amused and exiled the ringleaders. He proved a weak and ineffectual ruler, however. The genie of ethnic-nationalism, heralded by Greece's declaration of independence, was

now well and truly out of the bottle, with revolts in Lebanon, Crete, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and then Bulgaria to contend with. Abdülaziz's brutal suppression of these rebellions turned the European powers against the empire and, with the economy in freefall, the Young Ottomans, led by one Mithat Paşa, deposed the sultan.

The short-lived reign of Abdülaziz's nephew **Murat** gave way almost immediately to that of **Abdülhamid** (1876–1909) who, a few months into his rule, signed off a new **constitution** drawn up by Mithat Paşa and his associates. In theory this was a real step forward, confirming the equality of all Ottoman citizens, reducing the power of the grand vizier, introducing secular courts and establishing a parliamentary structure. The sultan, though, was confirmed as both head of state and caliph of the Islamic world, and was able to use his position to subvert the new constitution.

The empire soon came under pressure from all sides. In 1877 the **Russians** attacked from the Caucasus and the Balkans, resulting in great territorial losses and ending with the enemy forces just a stone's throw from İstanbul. **Britain**, alarmed at the Russian advance, intervened and forced the Russians to withdraw. As a reward Britain demanded, and was duly given, the right to govern **Cyprus** (to protect the sea link to India via Suez) in return for guaranteeing to defend the Ottomans if Russia attacked again. It also extracted a promise from the sultan to look after the empire's Christian minorities. Under the terms of the 1878 Conference of Berlin, the empire saw Romania, Montenegro and Serbia given **independence**, Bosnia-Herzegovina come under Austrian control, and Bulgaria gain autonomy.

In 1878, **Abdülhamid** dropped any pretence of consulting his ministers, and dissolved the chamber of deputies. He became increasingly paranoid, closeting himself away in a new palace, the **Yıldız Sarayı**, censoring the press and sending spies out across the empire. He began to emphasize the Islamic nature of the empire, seeing this as a bulwark against the designs of the Western powers, resulting in pogroms against the Christian Armenians in the east of **Anatolia** in 1895–96. At the same time he cultivated Germany, which was then playing catch-up with the leading colonial powers, resulting in the construction of the famous **Berlin–Baghdad railway**, which ran through İstanbul. He also oversaw the introduction of an extensive **telegraph system** and tried to modernize the infrastructure of the state and to service its debts.

But, in 1889, a new movement arose to challenge the authority of the sultan. **The Committee for Union and Progress** (CUP), had its heart in the cosmopolitan city of Salonica in Macedonia, especially amongst the officers of the Third Army. Seeing the empire falling apart as ethnic group after ethnic group broke away to form states of their own, the CUP, nicknamed the Young Turks began to see Turkish nationalism (as opposed to Pan-Islam or cosmopolitan Ottomanism) as a cure for the empire's ills. In July 1908 they demanded the **restoration** of the constitution of 1876 and, with feelings running high amongst the populace, the sultan had no choice but to accede.

In 1909 **Abdülhamid** was deposed for supporting a rebellion against the CUP and was replaced by **Mehmet V** (1909–18), who promised to respect the nation's will. With the sultan now little more than a figurehead, the real power lay with key officers within CUP. In 1913, enraged by what they saw as incompetence and cowardice in the war against an encroaching combined Bulgarian, Montenegran, Serbian and Greek army, the officers staged a coup and established a **military junta**. The unlikely alliance of Balkan states soon fell apart, allowing the Ottomans to retake parts of Thrace. This minor success was

sufficient to make heroes of the junta, now effectively down to a triumvirate of Cemal Paşa, Talat Paşa and Enver Paşa.

## World War I

The CUP was now firmly Turkish-nationalist, secular and technocrat in ideology, and authoritarian by nature. Ignoring public opinion and the counsel of other CUP members alike, the triumvirate signed an alliance with **Germany** on August 2 1914. By November the country was at war with the Allied powers, getting off to a spectacularly bad start when Enver Paşa lost an entire army on the eastern front against Russia in 1914–15. On the southeast frontier the Arabs, with British support, rebelled and eventually gained their independence. The only bright spot was the successful resistance to Britain's attempts to force the Dardanelles, which guarded the sea approaches to the Bosphorus and İstanbul. The victory at **Gallipoli** made a hero of **Mustafa Kemal**, later Atatürk, a young officer and CUP member, whose reward from an envious Enver was to be shunted off to various obscure fronts until the end of the war.

Following the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, the Russians withdrew from the war and the Turks were able to secure their northeastern frontier. Despite this the Ottoman Empire, its cause hopeless from the outset of the war, surrendered to the Allies on October 30 1918 and, on November 13, a British fleet sailed through the **Dardanelles**, up into the Bosphorus, and occupied **İstanbul**.



# An independent Turkey

At the end of World War I, Anatolia, the heartland of the Ottoman Empire, was shattered, its population drastically reduced by war, starvation and deportations. The victorious Allies immediately began their long-planned carve-up of the "sick man of Europe". The French occupied much of southeast Anatolia, the Italians parts of the Mediterranean and Aegean coast, the British İstanbul and Thrace and the Greeks claimed İzmir, on the Aegean coast. Emboldened by the Ottoman Empire's humiliation and the backing of the Allies, particularly

### The Armenian question

World War I proved an unmitigated disaster for the empire's **Christian Armenians**. With Russia pressing from the east, the Armenians, large numbers of whom inhabited the eastern Anatolian borderlands, were seen by the Turkish authorities as a threat from within. While many Armenians in this region did join the Russians following Enver's humiliating defeat, even more did not, especially the hundreds of thousands who lived in towns and cities right across Anatolia, as well as a huge population in **İstanbul**. Anywhere between 800,000 and 1.5 million Armenians perished in forced marches or were slain in massacres. The issue is still very much alive, with Armenians claiming their losses amounted to genocide, and the Turkish state denying any systematic slaughter. The Armenian lobby in the USA continually presses the administration to recognize the massacres of WWI as **genocide**. The pressure has been resisted, largely because Turkey remains a vital US ally in the Middle East, but whilst running for the presidency Barack Obama confirmed his support for the Congressional passage of the Armenian Genocide Resolution. France, with an Armenian community of some 300,000, passed a bill recognizing the genocide in 1998, whilst in Switzerland it is a criminal offence to deny it.

Britain, the Greeks were intent on reviving the idea of a **Greater Greece**, to include not only the Greek state that had emerged in 1830, but also much of the Aegean and Black Sea coastline of Anatolia, where millions of Greeks still lived. The sultan's abject capitulation to the Allies' demands, and the thought of the Ottoman Empire being totally dismembered and **Muslims** being made into second-class citizens, was too much for many Turks, who were now every bit as **nationalistic** as, for example, their former Balkan subjects.

## The War of Independence

Mustafa Kemal, hero of Gallipoli, proved the catalyst for what would become known as the **War of Independence**. Foolishly commissioned by the collaborationist War Ministry to travel across Anatolia and halt the various bands of Turkish patriots who were refusing to lay down their arms, he set sail from İstanbul and landed at the Black Sea port of **Samsun** on May 19, 1919. Kemal succeeded in lighting the torch of revolt across Anatolia and soon the Turks were fighting the French in the southeast, the Italians in the southwest, the Armenians in the northeast, and the Greeks in the west. In 1920 the Nationalists claimed to be the rightful government and established a parliament in the dusty Central Anatolian town of **Ankara**. In the same year the **Treaty of Sèvres**, imposed on Sultan Mehmet VI (1918–22) by the Allies and promising, amongst other things, İzmir and Thrace to Greece, independence to Armenia and autonomy to Kurdistan, only served to fuel the determination of the Nationalists. In 1922 they routed the Greeks at the battle of Dumlupınar and the humiliated remnants of the Greek army were evacuated from İzmir.

The **Nationalists** were now in control, and in November 1922 they abolished the sultanate, forcing Mehmet VI to slip away from İstanbul on a British warship, bound for exile in Italy. The war-weary Allies were finally forced to come to terms with the new Turkish state, and the **Treaty of Lausanne**, signed on July 24, 1923, recognized the frontiers won in the War of Independence. In the internationally mediated population exchange of 1923, nearly all the Greek Orthodox Christians left in Turkey (some 1.3 million) were sent to Greece, and the Muslim Turkish population of Greece were sent to Turkey. Although the Greek Orthodox population of İstanbul was exempted, along with the Muslims of western Thrace, it marked a sorry end for Ottoman cosmopolitanism and the ascendancy of virulent **ethnic nationalism**.

## The Republic

The Turks, under the leadership of the charismatic **Mustafa Kemal** had plucked victory from the jaws of defeat. A new, secular, **Republic of Turkey** was declared on October 29 1923. The old imperial capital of İstanbul was deliberately passed over in favour of the provincial town of Ankara, seat of the resistance in the War of Independence, and a new parliament created. **İstanbul**, brutally shorn of its political role, was forced to rely solely on its business and commercial acumen. Yet it was able to recover from the war more readily than the rest of the country because its influential Christian minorities – forcibly ejected elsewhere – were permitted to stay in the former capital.

The new Republic, under Kemal's watchful eye, set about a drastic programme of **reforms**. The caliphate was abolished, religious schools (*medrese*) and dervish orders closed, and Islam brought under state control. The fez, seen as progressive when it replaced the turban in the Tanzimat reforms, was outlawed as reactionary. The Gregorian calendar replaced the Islamic lunar one, alcohol was legalized, streets were numbered and the Western Sunday, rather than the Islamic

Friday, became the official day of rest. **Women** won greater rights, with divorce now a matter for civil rather than religious courts, polygamy was banned, and eventually full voting rights were established. A team of language experts was set up to purge Turkish of its many Arabic and Persian loan words and the **Arabic alphabet** was replaced by a Latin one. In 1934 the entire population was forced to adopt surnames (this was when Mustafa Kemal became "Atatürk" or "Father of the Turks"). The name Constantinople, which had been used in Ottoman times alongside İstanbul, was also banned (see box, p.320).

The reforms were radical and inevitably there was some opposition, notably in the **Kurdish revolts** of 1925, 1930 and 1938, as well as **assassination** attempts on the great man himself. These put a dampener on the development of real democracy, and attempts to go beyond the one-party rule of the founding **Republican People's Party** (RRP) quickly foundered. In 1926 **Sedad Hakki Eldem**, the young Republic's leading architect and a great admirer of Atatürk and his revolution, while standing in line to meet his hero in Bursa, commented "He (Atatürk) was born to be ruler and that is how they treat him. I don't like that kind of behaviour but it seems to be in our blood."

Understandably suspicious of the western powers who had so recently attempted to carve up what was left of the Ottoman Empire, the Republic was determined to be self-sufficient, setting up its own banks and instituting a series of five-year plans to boost **agriculture**. State-controlled industries like mining, steel and cement did provide a certain amount of independence, but they were heavily subsidized and grossly inefficient.

**Atatürk**, his liver ravaged by a lifetime's devotion to the fiery aniseed drink rakı, died on November 10 1938, aged 59. Ironically for a man so determined to excise his people's Ottoman past, he passed away not only in the old imperial capital, İstanbul, but in that symbol of late nineteenth-century royal excess, the **Dolmabahçe Palace**, on the banks of the Bosphorus in Beşiktaş.

## World War II and beyond

**Atatürk** was succeeded as **president** by his fomer right-hand man and the architect of Turkey's diplomatic success at Lausanne, **İsmet İnönü** (1884–1973). Keen to avoid the mistakes of World War I, İnönü steered a skilful diplomatic course when World War II became inevitable, signing neutrality pacts with Britain and France in 1939 and a treaty of non-aggression with **Nazi Germany** in 1941. İnönü kept Turkey out of the war, but he couldn't stop the conflict affecting his country, and a **black market** economy developed; there were shortages of basic commodities, profiteering, and massive government budget deficits. To make up for such lossess, the state introduced the Varlık Vergisi or "**Wealth Tax**" applied in a discriminatory fashion to extort money from the Armenian, Greek and Jewish population – most of whom lived in İstanbul. Defaulters had their property confiscated and/or were sent to **labour camps** in Anatolia, where many died. The country finally entered the war on the Allied side in early 1945, in order to qualify for **UN membership**.

## The postwar years: coups and yet more coups

With Russia demanding territory in eastern Anatolia and joint control of the entrance to the Bosphorus, and the US promising aid to states threatened by communism, it was inevitable that Turkey would ally itself with the **Western powers**. The newly aligned Turkey, benefiting from **Marshall Plan aid**, was now under pressure to democratize. In the 1950 elections, a breakaway cell of

the RPP, the **Democrat Party** (DP), led by **Adnan Menderes** (1899–1961), swept to victory. Flush with aid and loans, Menderes presided over an economic boom which saw the countryside flooded with shiny new imported tractors, and a new road system in **İstanbul** filled with equally shiny cars and trucks.

Of farming stock himself, Menderes was worshipped by the conservative **rural population** (one of his first acts was to rescind Atatürk's ban on using Arabic in the call to prayer) but distrusted by the bureaucratic and commercial elite in the cities, especially İstanbul and, crucially, also the staunchly secular military. When the economy began to falter in 1953, with a soaring **national debt**, huge trade deficit, and a massively over-valued lira, the DP became increasingly autocratic. Looking for a distraction from the country's economic woes, Menderes quickly found a suitable scapegoat, the İstanbul **Greek minority** population. In 1955, with tensions high over **Cyprus**, the DP-sponsored **demonstrations** soon got out of hand, with mobs ransacking Greek property. The police, apparently under orders not to intervene, stood and watched the mayhem. It was the beginning of the end for the city's **Greek Orthodox Christian minority**, many of whom left in the immediate aftermath of the riots.

With the country saved from bankruptcy only by an **International Monetary Fund loan**, an increasingly insecure Menderes became yet more authoritarian. Finally, their pay and social status diminished, the military snapped, and, on May 27 1960, staged a coup. Menderes and two of his right-hand men were hanged for **treason** and many other ministers were jailed. A new constitution was unveiled, and in 1961 **İsmet İnönü** became prime minister of a coalition government with a leading general, Cemal Güreş, as president. The paradox of a **democracy** being "saved" by military intervention, a factor bedevilling Turkish politics to this day, was born.

Far from setting Turkey on the straight and narrow, the coup only served to further polarize and fragment the nation. During the Sixties, the number of political parties proliferated, with the mantle of the banned DP being taken up by the **Justice Party**. The RPP became an increasingly elitist party, drawing its support from the military, civil servants and business people owing their wealth to lucrative state contracts, and extremist parties emerged on both the left and right. **Street battles** between leftists and rightists, and violence on university campuses (not least in the nation's biggest city, İstanbul) eventually led the military to intervene again on March 12, 1971.

After a few years of relative calm, the Seventies were to prove even more divisive for Turkey. Street fighting erupted once again between radicalized groups, pitching left against right and Alevi (see p.107) against Sunni – alongside a renewed national consciousness amongst the country's only remaining sizeable minority population, the **Kurds**, and the rise of an openly Islamic political party, the National Salvation Party. Right-wing gunmen opened fire on protestors attending a May Day rally in Taksim Square on May 1, 1977, resulting in 39 deaths. By 1980 there were, at one stage, over twenty tit for tat politically orientated murders a day in İstanbul, where followers of a particular group could be told apart by the shape of their moustache or what clothes they were wearing. A military takeover was inevitable and on September 12, 1980, the nation underwent a third **coup** – much, it has to be said, to the relief of ordinary Turks fed up with the escalating violence.

Rule by the new **military junta**, the National Security Council (NSC) lasted three years, with İstanbul and the rest of the country under **martial law**. Political parties were closed down, **trade unions** banned and their officials put on trial, universities purged of "radicals", and "seditious" literature burned. The new **constitution**, promulgated in 1982, was extremely restrictive in nature

– banning, for example, the use of the Kurdish language – and continues to hamper true democracy in Turkey to this day.

# Turkey reborn

The junta's restoration of civilian rule in 1983 marked a new beginning for Turkey, with the rise of a different breed of politician, less shackled to the restraints of the Kemalist revolution. Whether **US-educated technocrats** like Turgut Ozal or Tansu Çiller or fiery **pro-Islamists** such as Necmettin Erbakan or Tayip Erdoğan, they saw their country as part of, rather than isolated from, the world at large.

## The Motherland Party and the Kurdish backlash

The first party to benefit from restored civilian rule was the newly formed **Motherland Party**, led by the charismatic half-Kurdish **Turgut Özal** (1927–1993), which swept to power in the general elections – much to the chagrin of the military. Ozal, a great orator and contradictory mix of pious Muslim and bon vivant, was in the mould of a **Thatcher** or **Reagan**, at least when it came to the country's finances, and he introduced sweeping reforms bringing Turkey in line with the **international economy**. This had mixed results, with a **tourism** boom boosting the nation's foreign currency reserves and spending on imported luxury goods decimating them. He angered the military-bureaucratic elite by easing restrictions on Islam, giving extra funding to the Department of Religious Affairs and allowing schools where religious instruction was a key component of the curriculum, inadvertently helping sow the seeds of **Islamic fundamentalism**.

Despite Ozal's apparent liberalism, **human rights** abuses, which had peaked in the aftermath of the 1980 coup, continued. In the ethnically Kurdish southeast of the country the military was engaged in a war of attrition with the **Kurdish Workers Party** (PKK). At a loss as to how deal with a people who refused to be assimilated, security forces sometimes resorted to less than legal methods to suppress the movement, further fuelling resentment in the economically backward southeast.

**Ozal** died of a heart attack in 1993, depriving the country of a leader who, while far from perfect, was vigorous and reform-minded. Under Ozal's successor and Turkey's first **female prime minister**, **Tansu Çiller** (1946–present), the early Nineties were dominated by corruption scandals, massive inflation and the spiralling war in the southeast. This conflict drove hundreds of thousands of villagers from their land, exacerbating a rural-urban migration that had been underway since the Fifties, and which had accelerated following Ozal's market-orientated reforms. The **migrants**, bringing with them a different culture and a host of social problems for the future, settled in shanty towns on the outskirts of the big cities, particularly **İstanbul**, where a population of a little under three million in 1980 had risen fourfold by 2003.

## The rise of political Islam

The loosening of restrictions on Islam by the secular **Atatürkist** state, begun under Menderes and reaching new levels under **Ozal**, began to have a real effect in the political arena. In the 1994 municipal elections, the overtly Islamic

**Refah party** took İstanbul and many other cities across the land, including the capital, Ankara. İstanbul's Refah mayor was Tayip Erdoğan, who proved himself to be efficient, pragmatic and honest – rare attributes in the Turkish political scene. He addressed many of the most pressing problems plaguing the booming **metropolis**, laying on extra buses, improving the waste collection system, reducing pollution and providing facilities for the disabled. Secularist concerns that areas full of bars, clubs and restaurants such as Beyoğlu would be turned, overnight, into pious "dry" zones proved unfounded, and life went on much as before.

Following **Refah**'s success in the 1996 general elections, fears that the country would soon be subject to Iranian-style **Shariah rule** also proved groundless as Refah signed a **military treaty** with Israel, allowed the US continued use of airbases on Turkish soil, and party leader **Erbakan** laid a wreath at the mausoleum of that scourge of Islam, Atatürk. Despite this, in 1997 the nation's ultimate arbiters of power, the **National Security Council** (comprising Turkey's five top military commanders, the president, prime minister and three leading ministers) forced Erbakan to step down, in what has become known as the "silent coup", and Refah was dissolved. In 1998 **Erdoğan**, then mayor of İstanbul for the newly formed pro-Islamic **Fazilet party**, was jailed for four months for "inciting armed fundamentalist rebellion" in a speech he gave in the southeast of the country. Ironically, the words he was prosecuted for ("the mosques are our barracks, the minarets our bayonets, the domes our helmets") were written by Ziya Gökalp, a leading idealogue of Turkish secular nationalism. In 1999 a massive quake rocked the environs of the city, with up to 20,000 lives lost, mainly as a result of shoddy building. The military suffered a dent to its reputation in the aftermath, with soldiers more intent on preventing looting than helping the victims.

## A fractured state

In 2001, against a backdrop of **financial crisis**, which saw the lira halve in value against the dollar and inflation rise from 21 to 50 percent, the Fazilet party was banned for **anti-secular** activities (mainly supporting the right of women to wear the headscarf in universities and government workplaces). But in 2002, Fazilet's replacement, the **Justice and Development party** (AKP) swept to power, winning 34 percent of the vote and 363 of 550 parliamentary seats. It was the first majority government for fifteen years, and **pro-Islamic** to boot. In March 2003 the Turkish parliament showed a new-found independence from a country which had been its staunchest Cold War ally, bringing US-Turkish relations to a new low by voting against a request to allow American troops the use of Turkey as a springboard for the invasion of Saddam Hussein's Iraq. In November that year İstanbul suffered a series of **terrorist atrocities**, with bombs exploding outside two synagogues killing 25 and injuring 300. A few days later it was the turn of Britain, a US ally in the Iraq invasion, with blasts at the consulate in Beyoğlu and at the London-based HSBC bank killing 30 and injuring 450.

Meanwhile the "pro-Islamic" AKP, under the leadership of former İstanbul mayor **Erdoğan**, pursued the nation's long-cherished dream of becoming an **EU** member-state far more avidly than the secular, supposedly Western-orientated governments that had preceded them, and, in 2005, accession talks began. Despite the AKP's relative liberalism, the power wielded by state institutions such as the NSC and the constitutional court continued to constrain freedom of speech. Both Nobel Prize-winning author **Orhan Pamuk** (see p.137) and newspaper editor **Hrant Dink**, İstanbul resident and an ethnically

Armenian-Turkish citizen, were prosecuted under article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, which makes it an offence to "denigrate Turkishness". Although the charges against Pamuk were dropped, Dink, a campaigner for recognition by the Turkish state that the deportations and massacres of the Armenian population in 1915–17 constituted a criminal act, was prosecuted on three occasions. In January 2007 Dink was **assassinated** on the streets of İstanbul in broad daylight by an ultra-nationalist youth. 100,000 people marched in protest, shouting "We are all Armenians". Then a scandal erupted when photographs were published showing the assassin posing in front of a poster of Atatürk, flanked by security officials and holding a Turkish flag. The rift in Turkish society was clear to see, with liberal Turks marching in solidarity with the city's Armenian minority, and ultra-nationalists viewing the assassin as a heroic defender of the homeland. It later turned out that police had long known about the **assassination plot**, but had failed to act. Many believed elements of the "deep state", a shadowy network of ultra-nationalist, ultra-secularist politicians, police officials, military officers and the **mafia**, seen by some as the tail wagging the state dog, were behind the murder.

In Spring 2007 the AKP nominated one of its own party, **Abdullah Gül**, as president. The staunchly secular military objected to the choice, particularly as Gül's wife wore the traditional Muslim **headscarf**, seen as a symbol of political Islam. In what has become known as the "e-coup" the military posted a warning on their website, suggesting they might step in if Gül were to be appointed. Millions of secular Turks took to the streets, in what later turned out to be carefully orchestrated anti-government rallies, to protest against Gül's candidacy and what they saw as creeping **Islamicization**.

## To the present day

The threat of a coup forced an early **election** in July 2007, in which the **AKP** captured 47 percent of the vote nationwide – a **massive** majority – and a 43.5 percent slice of the vote in İstanbul. It was the first time for 50 years that a party had won a second term in office with an increased majority. **Gül** (1950–present)

### The Deep State

The existence of a shadowy, ultra-nationalist "**deep state**", working illegally to preserve the status quo, had been suspected since 1996, when a car crashed in Susurluk. Pulled from the wreckage were weapons, drugs and the bodies of a police chief, Interpol-wanted gangster/assassin **Abdullah Çatlı** and his ex-model girlfriend, alongside the sole survivor, a member of parliament. The scandal was covered up, and Susurluk became a byword for political corruption, hush-ups and official tolerance of the "deep state".

Then, in June 2007, the discovery of an arms cache in a house in the Ümraniye district of İstanbul appeared to prove a link between a branch of the Turkish security forces and a number of "terrorist attacks". The resulting **Ergenekon trial** saw high-ranking generals (albeit retired ones), army officers, a lawyer, politicians, journalists, academics and mafia members appear in court on charges including being members of an armed **terrorist group**, attempting to overthrow the (AKP) government and treason. The group is suspected of having carried out a number of high-profile attacks largely designed to create the impression that Turkey was under threat from revolutionary forces, allowing the state's self-appointed guardians to save their nation from itself. The case is expected to take years to reach a conclusion, with over eighty suspects on trial and a near 2,500-page indictment.

## Mustafa – the movie

The film **Mustafa**, unveiled to cinema audiences on Republic Day (Oct 29) 2008, soon became a controversial symbol of a divided nation. Concentrating on **Atatürk's** private life, it portrays him as fallible; hard drinking, chain-smoking, lonely and full of self-doubt. It was too much for the staunchest secularists, who see the Atatürk personality cult (his statue graces public spaces and all state offices across the nation, his portrait every school classroom) as the glue binding Turkey's disparate elements together, leading a *Vatan* newspaper columnist to write "Do not watch this film, prevent people from watching it … keep your children away from it". By contrast, liberals, intellectuals and Islamists felt the film revealed nothing new about Turkey's founder and did little to debunk the carefully nurtured state "myths" about the great man.

was duly elected president and attention focused on the headscarf issue once again, as the AKP attempted to repeal a law (which dated back only to the 1998 banning of the Refah party) forbidding wearing the headscarf at universities. Against a background of slowing **EU-orientated** reform and a resurgence of PKK attacks in the southeast, the constitutional court decided to hear a case against the AKP early in 2008, accusing it of "anti-secular activities". The **stock market** and the lira both tumbled as a result. The AKP was reprieved in July 2008, but was soundly rebuked, and had its allocation of treasury funds slashed by half. The legislation introduced by the AKP allowing the **headscarf** to be worn in universities was overturned, the guardians of the state having deemed it "an expression of Islamic sympathies in a state institution".

The year drew to a close with Turkey facing wearily familiar problems. PM **Erdoğan** was under domestic pressure from all sides, accused by the liberals of abandoning democratic, EU-orientated reforms, by the military-bureaucratic elite represented by the army, civil servants and the staunchly secular main opposition party, the **Cumhüriyet Halk Partisi** (CHP or Republican People's Party) of attempting to bring in Sharia rule by the back door, and by the Kurds of treating their problems as purely economic, rather than ethnic and cultural, in nature. Turkish society appeared more obviously polarized than ever before, not least in terms of wealth, with the publication of a report showing that Turkey has the greatest income disparity in the world after **Mexico**. This is nowhere seen more clearly than the seething megalopolis of İstanbul, where the elite are chauffer-driven between plush offices and sumptuous Bosphorus-front villas, while millions of recent migrants from impoverished eastern Anatolia subsist in semi-legal **shanty towns** on the outskirts, despite the best efforts of a government-backed housing programme known as TOKI.

There was plenty to be optimistic about, though. The world economic crisis appeared to affect Turkey no more than elsewhere, thanks to the AKP's economic reforms and the stability engendered by majority rule. An outright coup had been averted and the government, its wrists smacked rather than manacled, was engaged in previously unthinkable dialogue with both **Armenia** and the **Kurdish** administration in Northern **Iraq**. In a bid to reconcile its largest minority, the government announced the launch of a state-funded TV channel that would broadcast in a language outlawed between 1980 and 1991 (and barely tolerated in official circles since) – Kurdish. Last but not least, **tourism** was booming, notably in **İstanbul**, which has become a hip short-break destination for culture-vultures and party animals as well as the more traditional historical sites brigade. *Newsweek* magazine's front cover of August 2005, headlined "Cool İstanbul: Europe's Hippest City" was proving prescient.

# Music

Istanbul, following years of rural-urban migration, is now home to people from every part of Anatolia, and their musical heritage lives on in a metropolis often described as the nation's biggest village. **Traditional Turkish music**, its roots stretching back millennia to the different cultures and civilizations that have flourished here, is both complex and vibrant. Thankfully, it has managed to maintain both its creativity and popularity – even with the younger generation – though this has not prevented the rise of a lively, Western-influenced **rock**, **pop** and even **hip-hop** scene.

## Traditional Turkish music

**Traditional sounds** have more than held their own in this fast-changing country. Channel-surf Turkish TV any evening and you're bound to hit upon a show or two devoted to native Turkish music, with the sight of a moustachioed bard coaxing melancholic Anatolian folk songs from his *saz* or *bağlama* (types of lute) or an orchestra of tuxedoed men and sombrely clad women solemnly accompanying a warbling *sanatçi* (singer of Turkish classical music). **Arabesk**, an Arab/Egyptian-influenced style of music invariably charting the singers' wretched lot in life, remains extremely popular, especially amongst the poor and dispossessed. Its most famous proponent, İbrahim Tatlıses, is a national institution and hosts his own enormously popular TV show as well as selling in vast quantities. *Türkü* bars (see p.204) are devoted to the various lovelorn strands of **halk muziği** (best translated as "people's" or folk music) and are very popular with the younger generation.

Played mainly by Roma (gypsy) bands, **fasil**, a curious but lively hybrid of Ottoman classical and folk, with violins, clarinets, *darbuka* drums and powerful, emotive vocals to the fore, is the genre of İstanbul's vibrant **meyhane** scene (see p.195). The hypnotic, spiritual strains of **Sufi** music, most often associated with the Mevlevi or "whirling" dervish order and popular amongst world music aficionados, is very much a minority interest in its home country, though it can be heard in several places in the city, including the Mevlevihanesi in Galata (see p.138).

Turkish classical or **sanat** music is the most inaccessible home-grown style to foreign ears – and the least popular domestically despite the undoubted virtuosity of its leading musicians. Originating in the Ottoman court, this subtle, partly improvisational but often gloomy-sounding music is performed by chamber orchestras using a combination of traditional Turkish wind and string instruments backed by drums.

### Music documentaries

The best introduction to a whole range of traditional Turkish music is Nezih Ezen's 2008 documentary, **Lost Songs of Anatolia** (Ⓦ www.lostsongsofanatolia.com). A talented musician himself, Ezen's unsentimental but sensitive film is a labour of love some five years in the making. Travelling across Turkey's vast landscape, recording and filming in obscure towns and remote villages, he vividly captures the musical heritage of modern Turkey – one deeply rooted in the many ethnic and cultural identities that make up the nation. In the rain-soaked mountains of the eastern Black Sea, Laz (a Caucasian

## Selected discography

The music reviewed below will provide a good introduction to the major strands of traditional Turkish music.

### Arabesk

**İbrahim Tatlıses** *Fosforlu Cevriyem* (Emre). This live recording is a rare chance to hear what *arabesk* sounds like in the flesh, and gives a sense of Tatlıses' phenomenal vocal presence. Includes some of his all-time favourites, plus superb *uzun hava* semi-improvisations.

### Folk

**Belkis Akkale** *Türkü Türkü Türkiyem* (Sembol Plak). One of the greatest female *türkü* singers at her earthiest, carried along by driving *saz* rhythms – plus almost all of the traditional instruments of Turkey.

### Fasil

**Karşılama** *Karşılama* (Green Goat, Canada/Kalan). İstanbul Gypsy musicians led by Selim Sesler on G-clarinet, with locally trained Canadian vocalist Brenna MacCrimmon, interpret Roma music from western Turkey and the Balkans. Played with real panache, and it's good to have some of the vocal repertoire – gleaned from archival recordings and manuscripts – expertly showcased.

### Sufi

**Mevlana** *Dede Efendi Saba Ayini* (Kalan). A benchmark recording of a complete Mevlevi suite (*ayin*) composed by Dede Efendi. The performers read like a who's who of early twentieth-century Turkish *sanat*, with Mesut Cemil on cello, Akagündüz Kutbay, Ulvi Erguner and Niyazi Sayın on the wind instrument known as a *ney*, Cüneyd Orhon on *kemençe* (a kind of violin) and Saadettin Heper on *küdüm* (kettle drum).

### Sanat

**Mesut Cemil** *Early Recordings (Vol 1)* and *Instrumental and Vocal recordings (Vols 2–3)* (Golden Horn Records/US). Virtuoso musicianship and compositions from the man who ran the classical music section of TRT-İstanbul for decades.



people who speak a language related to Georgian) dance the *horon* (a line dance) to the sound of the *kemençe* (upright fiddle) and *tulum* (bagpipe), while in the mountains of Bingöl a *dengbey* (Kurdish bard) uses only his voice to chart the history of his people. In an İstanbul apartment, a couple of elderly Armenian ladies sing a moving lament to an Anatolia long lost to them, whilst in the same city an ethnically Greek ensemble play a "Greek blues" *rebétika* number. A couple of rake-thin elderly bards in a smoky teahouse in the Armenian border-town of Kars play the *saz* and battle out an instrument- and lyric-based duel; in the cotton fields of the Çukurova near Adana a group of young women from Diyarbakir, poorly paid seasonal workers, find solace from their back-breaking labour in song.

Although much of Fatih Akın's documentary **Crossing the Bridge** concentrates on contemporary music in İstanbul, there is plenty to keep traditional music buffs happy. The superb vocals and even better *saz* playing of Orhan Gençbay, a legend rivalled only by İbrahim Tatlıses in Arabesk music, feature, as does the heart-rending voice of the young Kurdish singer Aynur Doğan. The haunting sounds of Mercan Dede, a fusion of Sufi and modern electronica and big on the world music scene, get an airing, as do the Balkan sounds of Selim

Sesler, playing with an unlikely (but very talented) singer of traditional Turkish songs, Canadian Brenna MacCrimmon.

# Contemporary music

**Pop** has a surprisingly long history in Turkey, from the Tango stars of the Thirties through to Presley-imitators in the Fifties. It wasn't until the Seventies, though, that **rock** really took root, with the rise of the Anadolu (Anatolian) rock movement. Today, Western-style contemporary music is part and parcel of the diverse Turkish music scene – most of all in cosmopolitan İstanbul. The vast majority of these bands and singers perform in Turkish – which undermines their chances of achieving international success. But the best of them are worth a listen – and if you venture out into the city's labyrinthine **nightlife** scene you are bound, at some point, to have your ears assailed by familiar pop or hip-hop beats accompanied by unfamiliar Turkish vocals.

## Rock

**Duman** are among the most accessible of the current crop. Erroneously labelled punk in their early days (itself indicative of the relatively conservative nature of the scene here), the İstanbul-based group are in fact a straightforward rock band, mixing uptempo anthems with lighter waving ballads and traditional Turkish folk songs. *Bu akşam* ("This evening") and *Belki alışmam lazım* ("Maybe I'd better get used to it") are great songs by any standards.

**Pinhani** shot to fame in Turkey when some of their songs were used in the popular TV soap *Kavak Yelleri* ("Young and Carefree"). Don't let this put you off. Despite the number of disparate influences in their music – everything from Radiohead to the late, great Alevi troubadour Aşık Veysel and Greek *bouzouki* to Bach – their album *İnandığım Masallar* ("Fairy tales you can believe in") is a wonderfully laid-back, melodic and cohesive debut. Both bands have written paeans to their hometown, Duman's *İstanbul* an angry, punky thrash, while Pinhani's *In İstanbul* drips with urban melancholia.

Fellow "Stamboul" boys **Mor ve Ötesi** formed in 1995 and have built up a huge following in Turkey – in 2003 the indie four-piece played in front of 100,000 anti-Iraq war demonstrators in Ankara. Surprisingly, given their reputation for protest, they were chosen to represent Turkey in the 2008 **Eurovision Song Contest**, with *Deli* ("Crazy"), coming in seventh. Bear in mind that in Turkey the Eurovision Song Contest is not seen as the laughably kitsch endeavour it is across much of Europe – in this most patriotic of nations it is taken very seriously indeed.

**Sertab Erener**, the İstanbul-born belly-dancing diva who won the contest for Turkey in 2003 was, like Mor ve Ötesi, already a major star before the competition. She has recorded an album in English and appeared in **Fatih Akın's** *Crossing the Bridge* documentary (see p.339) singing an orientalized version of Madonna's *Music*.

Another couple of bands who feature in Akın's *Crossing the Bridge* are **Baba Zula** and **Replikas**. Prog-rockers Replikas take extended, experimental soloing to extremes but are talented musicians with a loyal following. **Baba Zula** may be wacky, but their self-styled "oriental-dub" is mesmeric live and with their Sixties hippie throwback looks (big beards, long straggly hair, cowboy hats) and very un-PC belly-dancer they make an entertaining live act. Far more popular

is **Şebnem Ferah**. Born in Yalova, near Bursa, she is of Balkan (Macedonian) ancestry. Her goth-metal looks, powerful voice and the helping hand of that doyenne of the Turkish music scene, **Sezen Aksu** (see below), have helped secure her fame – though her brand of soft rock and power ballads will not be to everyone's taste. **Nu-metallers Çilekeş** hail from Ankara, but frequently play in İstanbul. More radical are long-established punks **Rashit**, who have played with the likes of the Dead Kennedys and the Offspring and had their 2005 album *Herşeyin Bir Bedeli Var* released on Sony.

## Hip-hop

The roots of the rap scene in Turkey lie among the Turkish community in Germany. Invariably urban, often poor, disenfranchised and discriminated against, hip-hop provided a natural outlet for their anger and frustration. The movement was kick-started by the suitably controversial **Cartel** in the mid-Nineties – following a serious inter-fight their album was banned. The scene in İstanbul really got going with another star of *Crossing the Bridge*, the city's very own Eminem – **Ceza**. Worshipped by multitudes of the city's disaffected youth, he was born on the Asian side of the Bosphorus in Üsküdar, taking his name (*ceza* means punishment) from one of his early jobs – handing out fines to people who failed to pay their electricity bills. Ceza's success has bred envy, and in 2007 he was accused of lifting his beats straight from Eminem by rival İstanbul rapper **Ege Çubukçu**. Other names to look out for are **Sagopa Kajmer** and Ceza'a sister, **Ayben**. Turkish vocals apart, what marks this home-grown hip-hop out from its US inspiration is the sampling of *arabesk* and other forms of traditional Turkish music rather than Western pop.

## Pop

Pop music is huge in Turkey. It's also incredibly varied – though you might not think so on a first listen. Once a teen idol, now a housewives' favourite, **Tarkan** swivels his hips and belts out dance-orientated pop with apparent abandon, singing at the 2008 opening of the İstanbul Grand Prix. He's a big star in Germany as well as Turkey, and has produced one album in English.

Pop rockers/balladeers **Mustafa Sandal** and **Teoman** are firm fixtures on the TV music channels (see box below), as is the chanteuse **Yıldız Tilbe**. The multi-talented queen of the Turkish pop scene, **Sezen Aksu**, has helped to preserve and build upon the best of traditional Turkish urban music, both through skilfully updated covers of old songs and with new material incorporating their best elements. Nor is she afraid of controversy, tackling feminism, human rights and ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and singing in Ladino (the language of Turkey's Jewish population) and Kurdish as well as her native Turkish. Her albums vary enormously in style but 1995's *Işık Doğudan Yükselir* ("The Light Rises from the East") is a good starting point.

### Music on TV

Whether it's on your pint-sized hotel TV or a monster flat-screen in a café, restaurant, bar or club, you won't be able to escape the popular music channels. **Kral** and **Power Turk** are the most popular of the stations playing Turkish music – mainly pop, though Kral in particular mixes in generous slices of traditional stuff. **Dream** shows a blend of Turkish rock, indie, hip-hop and Western rock, while **MTV Türkiye** concentrates on non-Turkish artists.

# Turkish cinema

Turkey has had a moderately successful **film industry** since the Fifties, when corny rural-boy-meets-rural-girl melodramas provided escapism for Anatolian villagers. The outside world took little notice until the Seventies, when a few maverick filmmakers took Turkish cinema in a more radical direction.

## 1971–99: Early successes

**Yılmaz Güney**, a popular actor turned director, was imprisoned several times during the Seventies and Eighties for his leftist leanings. He nonetheless produced a series of hard-hitting films in the years around the coups of 1971 and 1980. The best were *Sürü* ("The Herd"), which follows a Kurdish shepherd and his family taking their flock to sell in distant Ankara and *Yol* ("The Road"). Written from the confines of his prison cell, with the outside directorial assistance of **Şerif Gören**, *Yol* takes an allegorical look at the state of the nation (then still under martial law) by following the fortunes of five prisoners who have been allowed a week's parole. The film was banned in Turkey, which only served to bring it to the notice of the international community, and in 1981 *Yol* was joint-winner of the Palme d'Or. The film finally made it onto the country's cinema screens in 1999, when it played to packed houses. Güney died of cancer in 1984, aged 46, the year after the release of his last film, *Duvar* ("Wall"), an unrelentingly gloomy critique of the country's overcrowded and brutal prison system.

With the exception of 1983's *Hakkâri'de Bir Mevsim* ("A Season in Hakkâri"), a visually stunning film examining the experiences of a young teacher sent to a remote Kurdish village to staff the local school, the Eighties' Turkish films made little impact on the outside world. Despite a lack of financial backing, the Nineties proved kinder, and in 1994 **Erden Kıral**'s *Mavi Sürgün* ("The Blue Exile") was nominated for an Academy Award. In 1995 **Mustafa Altıoklar**'s *İstanbul Kanatlarının Altında* ("İstanbul Beneath my Wings"), set in the seventeenth century during the reign of tyrant **Murat IV**, drew critical acclaim and was a box-office hit. **Hamam**, made in 1998 by **Ferzan Özpetek**, sees an Italian star inherit a run-down Turkish baths in İstanbul.

### Turkish cinema – domestic reality

As in every country, what the critics adore the vast majority of the public ignore. Ceylan's arty **Uzak** attracted some 20,000 cinema-goers within Turkey, whereas 2008's **Recep İvedik**, director Şahan Gökbakar's tale of an uneducated burping, farting and spitting taxi driver let loose in a five-star hotel grossed $24 million domestically. Equally successful was 2006's ultra-nationalistic **Kurtlar Vadisi – Irak** ("Valley of the Wolves – Iraq") a huge box-office action-thriller hit, in which the Turks get their fictional revenge for the real-life arrest of some of their military boys by the Americans in northern Iraq in 2003. 2008's **Avanak Kuzenler** ("The Dumb Cousins"), meanwhile, makes Hollywood gross-out comedies like *Dumb and Dumber* seem subtle and ironic.

Through his efforts to restore it, he discovers his own sexuality, making this one of the few Turkish films dealing with gay relationships to have gone on general release.

## 2000 to the present: critical accolades

The new millennium has seen Turkish cinema hit new heights. Leading the way is **Nuri Bilgi Ceylan**, who won the prestigious Best Director Award at Cannes in 2008 for *Üç Maymun* ("Three Monkeys"), which tells a familiar story of how power corrupts. In it a powerful politician involved in a hit and run incident escapes justice by sending his driver to prison in his place – and then sexually abuses the driver's wife. Ceylan had come to prominence with *Uzak* ("Distant"), a beautifully crafted, İstanbul-set film of urban alienation which won the Grand Prix award at Cannes. In between these two classics was the critically acclaimed but rather self-indulgent *İklimler* ("Climates"), an existentialist tale of a failing relationship starring Ceylan and his wife, Ebru.

**Fatih Akın**, a German-born and -bred Turk, had both Turkey and Germany claiming his 2004 Golden Bear winner, *Duvar Karsısı* ("Head On"), as their own. Personalities and cultures clash in this sometimes brutal tale of ill-matched Turkish–German lovers. **Akın**'s 2005 documentary *Crossing the Bridge: The Sound of Istanbul*, made with **Alexander Hacke**, has won many recent plaudits and is an unparalleled introduction to this great city's music scene (see p.334). 2007's *Yaşamın Kıyısında* ("Edge of Heaven") won best screenplay award at Cannes and five awards at Turkey's equivalent of the Oscars, Antalya's Golden Orange festival. Shot in Germany, İstanbul and the eastern Black Sea city of Trabzon, it traces the interconnecting lives of four Turks and two Germans, touching on issues of cultural estrangement, family relationships, lesbianism and political activism.

The first decade of the third millennia has seen a number of other Turkish films take their share of critical accolades. **Reha Erdem**'s 2006 *Beş Vakıt* ("Times and Winds") portrays the often grim realities of growing up in an idyllic-looking Turkish village and makes moving use both of the breathtakingly beautiful location of the village, which overlooks the Mediterranean from its cliff-edge eyrie, and the fresh-faced innocence of its child actors. 2007's *Yumurta* ("Egg"), the first part of a trilogy directed by **Semih Kaplanoğlu**, won a fistful of awards at the Golden Orange. A typically Turkish tale, it traces the life of Yusuf, a struggling poet running a secondhand bookshop in İstanbul who returns to his hometown when his mother dies. The second part of the trilogy, *Süt* ("Milk") winds back the clock to Yusuf's youth in his hometown, where he struggles financially (the family's milk business is barely breaking even, and who wants to pay for poetry?) and emotionally (denied the traditional coming-of-age rite of military conscription by a childhood health problem). Based on a true story, 2008's *Gitmek* (*My Marlon, My Brando*) **Hüseyin Karabey**'s first feature (he is a respected documentary filmmaker) is a gripping story of a Turkish woman's search for her Kurdish lover, trapped in Northern Iraq following the American invasion of 2003. The emotionally candid theatre actress Ayça leaves a rather grim looking Beyoğlu, crosses snowy Anatolia and enters Iran, hoping to meet her B-movie actor lover Hamal Ali on the Iran-Iraq border.

# Books

Many of the books reviewed below are, inevitably, general works on the **Byzantine** and **Ottoman** periods that include, rather than focus specifically on, İstanbul. For information on the **latest books** available, try I.B. Tauris (Ⓦwww.ibtauris.co.uk) or Saqi Books (Ⓦwww.saqibooks.com). It's possible to track down many of the books listed here through Turkey specialists Daunt Books, 83 Marylebone High St, London W1M 4DE (Ⓣ020/7224 2295, Ⓦwww.dauntbooks.co.uk). Most of the İstanbul bookstores listed on p.228 have a wide selection of books on Turkey, and much locally produced material (in English) which is hard to come by outside the city.

Note that "o/p" means **out of print**. Retail websites such as Ⓦwww.abebooks.com or Ⓦwww.bookfinder.com are excellent venues for hard-to-find or out-of-print items; almost every book in this bibliography can be found secondhand or on a print-on-demand/special-order basis through these sources.



## History

### Ancient history and archeology

**David Traill** *Schliemann of Troy: Treasure and Deceit*. The man versus the myth of his self-publicity: if you're intending to visit the ruins of ancient Troy, this volume, portraying the crumbling edifice of Schliemann's reputation as an archeologist, will help bring the old walls to life.

**Michael Wood** *In Search of the Trojan War*. A very readable examination of the reality behind the legend that is Troy by Britain's best-known populist archeologist, and a companion to the BBC series of the same name.

### Byzantine and early medieval history

**Roger Crowley** *Constantinople: The Last Great Siege: 1453*. Brilliantly written account of the fall of the Byzantine city to the Ottoman Turks by an ex-İstanbul resident passionate about his chosen subject. If you're only going to read one history book on the city, make it this one.

**Cyril Mango** (ed.) *Oxford History of Byzantium*. An accessible introduction, taking in daily life, economic policy and scholarship among other topics.

**John Julius Norwich** *Byzantium: The Early Centuries*, *The Apogee* and *The Decline*. An astonishingly detailed, well-informed and readable trilogy. Norwich later compressed his great work into a single volume, the

thorough and erudite *A Short History of Byzantium*.

**Procopius** *The Secret History*. Often raunchy account of the murkier side of the reigns of Justinian and his ex-courtesan empress, Theodora, from no less an authority than the imperial general Belisarius's official war historian.

## Ottoman history

**Caroline Finkel** *Osman's Dream*. A scholarly and meticulously researched yet engaging history of the Ottoman Empire, from its origins in the twelfth century through to its early twentieth-century collapse. For a single-volume work on such a vast topic it does a very commendable job.

**Jason Goodwin** *Lords of the Horizons*. A very readable, "popular" account of the Ottoman Empire. Sceptics may decry its headlong pace and thematic approach, but if you've little or no prior knowledge of the Ottoman world, Goodwin's book helps bring a complex chunk of history to life.

**Halil İnalcık** *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300–1600*. As the title says; the standard work, not superseded since its first 1973 appearance.

**Patrick Balfour Kinross** *The Ottoman Centuries*. Readable and balanced summary of Ottoman history from the fourteenth to the twentieth century.

**I. Metin Kunt & Christine Woodhead** *Süleyman the Magnificent and His Age*. Concise summary of the reign of the greatest Ottoman sultan, and of the cultural renaissance over which he presided.

**Philip Mansel** *Constantinople: City of the World's Desire, 1453–1924*. Nostalgic, faintly anti-Turkish Republic popular history, focusing on the imperial capital and organized topically as well as chronologically. The best read on the city's Ottoman past.

**Philip Mansel** *Sultans in Splendour – the Last Years of the Ottoman World*. The illustrations – a collection of rare photos depicting unbelievable characters from the end of the Ottoman Empire – make this book. Well written, it contains much information not available elsewhere.

**Nigel Steel & Peter Hart** *Defeat at Gallipoli*. Uses contemporary accounts to give a vivid impression of the siege.

**Andrew Wheatcroft** *The Ottomans*. Not an event-focused history but an analysis of trends in Ottoman life, and the way they have been represented by the West, usefully illustrated by period art, cartoons and photos.

## Modern history

**Michael Hickey** *Gallipoli*. The best single-volume history of the campaign.

**Faik Okte** *The Tragedy of the Turkish Capital Tax* (o/p). Short, remorseful monograph on the discriminatory World War II tax, written by the İstanbul director of finance who was responsible for its implementation.

**Barry Rubin** *İstanbul Intrigues*. Unputdownable account of Allied/Axis activities in neutral Turkey during World War II, and their attempts to drag it into the conflict. Surprising revelations about the extent of Turkish aid for Britain, the US and the Greek

resistance, and a wealth of detailed anecdote.

**Erik J. Zürcher** *Turkey, A Modern History*. If you have time for only one volume covering the post-1800 period, make it this one; it's well written and breathes some revisionist fresh air over sacred cows and received truths. Also with an opinionated, annotated bibliography.

# Biographies

**Saime Göksu & Edward Timms** *Romantic Communist: The Life and Works of Nazım Hikmet*. Turkey's most controversial modern poet, banned and imprisoned for seventeen years at home, Hikmet spent much of his life in the Soviet bloc and died in Moscow.

**Patrick Balfour Kinross** *Atatürk, the Rebirth of a Nation*. Long considered the definitive English biography – as opposed to hagiography – of the father of the Republic and still preferred by some to the newer Mango text (see opposite).

**Andrew Mango** *Atatürk*. Despite massive press acclamation, does not supersede Kinross's more readable tome as the best biography of the man, but merely complements it. Thorough and authoritative, but also steeped in military and conspiratorial minutiae.

**Michael Strachan** *Sir Thomas Roe 1581–1644: A Life*. Biography of an influential Elizabethan statesman who spent several years as ambassador to the Ottoman court and was head of the Levant Company. A fascinating insight into the perilous life and intrigues of Europeans in Constantinople.

# Minorities and religion

**Taner Akçam** *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide*. Brilliant study by a Turkish academic resident in the US, which shows how the ethnic cleansing of the Armenian population from 1895 to 1923, and the subsequent suppression of any memory of these events, was crucial to incipient Turkish nationalism – and remains at the root of the Republic's modern problems.

**Alexis Alexandris** *The Greek Minority of İstanbul and Greek-Turkish Relations 1918–1974* (Centre for Asia Minor Studies, Athens). Effectively illustrates how the treatment of this community has functioned as a gauge of general relations between Greece and Turkey.

**Peter Balakian** *The Burning Tigris: A History of the Armenian Genocide*. As partisan as one would expect from an Armenian-American, it is, nonetheless, a compelling and thorough analysis of the background to, and execution of, the massacres of the Armenians on Ottoman soil during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

**Bruce Clark** *Twice a Stranger; How Mass Expulsion Forged Modern Greece and Turkey*. The Greeks of İstanbul initially avoided the fate of their kin elsewhere in Anatolia, but the forced population exchanges of 1923 made their eventual departure inevitable. A very readable study of a cataclysmic event.

# Views of contemporary Turkey

**Stephen Kinzer** *Crescent and Star*. Engaging account of modern Turkey from the İstanbul-based correspondent of the *New York Times*. Whether *rakı*-drinking and *nargile*-toking with ordinary Turks, interviewing leading political figures, swimming across the Bosphorus or broadcasting the blues on his own show on Turkish radio, Kinzer has a gift for bringing the country to life.

**Andrew Mango** *The Turks Today*. This overview by a long-standing observer usefully concentrates on the period from the demise of Atatürk to 2004. By no means a rose-tinted view, but he gives the country an easy ride in too many areas, and the chapter on Kurdish issues is highly disposable.

**Chris Morris** *The New Turkey Today*. More up to date than Mango's book, Morris (BBC correspondent in Turkey for four years) writes in a very readable manner on the usual topics, from political Islam to the Greeks and Armenians, and from the Kurdish question to Turkey's EU accession quest.

**Nicole & Hugh Pope** *Turkey Unveiled: Atatürk and After* (UK); also published as *Turkey Unveiled: A History of Modern Turkey* (US). A series of interlinked essays by two foreign correspondents who, after two-plus decades in harness, understand Turkey better than most outsiders.

# Travel and memoirs

**Shirin Devrim** *A Turkish Tapestry: The Shakirs of İstanbul*. Turbulent chronicle of an eccentric, dysfunctional and talented aristocratic Ottoman family whose exploits, if anything, became even more colourful after 1923.

**Laurence Kelly** (ed) *İstanbul: A Traveller's Companion*. Well-selected historical writing and fascinating eyewitness accounts of historical events such as the Crusaders' sack of Constantinople.

**Mary Wortley Montagu** *Letters*, and the newer *Turkish Embassy Letters*. Impressions of an eccentric but perceptive traveller, resident in İstanbul during 1716–18, whose disregard for convention and popular prejudice gave her the edge over contemporary historians.

**İrfan Orga** *Portrait of a Turkish Family*. Heartbreaking story following the Orga family from an idyllic existence in late Ottoman İstanbul through grim survival in the early Republican era.

**Orhan Pamuk** *İstanbul: Memories of a City*. A thoughtful and sometimes moving memoir by Turkey's most famous novelist, reflecting on the author's troubled relationship with himself, his parents and the city he was born and raised in. The book's overriding theme is melancholy and decline from imperial greatness – reinforced by the copious black-and-white illustrations by Turkey's leading photographer, Ara Güler.

**Mary Seacole** *The Wonderful Adventures of Mrs Seacole in Many Lands*. This alternative Florence Nightingale was a black Jamaican who, unlike her paler-skinned compatriot, ministered to Crimean War casualties in İstanbul at her own expense.

**Daniel de Souza** *Under a Crescent Moon*. Turkish society seen from the bottom looking

up: an excellent volume of prison vignettes by a jailed foreigner, and in its compassion the antithesis of *Midnight Express*. Compellingly written and spiced with interesting prejudices.

# Architecture, arts and crafts

## Architecture and arts

**Metin And** *Turkish Miniature Painting – the Ottoman Period* (Dost Yayınları, İstanbul). Attractive, interesting account of the most important Ottoman art form. Loads of colour plates and well laid out.

**Diana Barillari & Ezio Godoli** *İstanbul 1900: Art Nouveau Architecture and Interiors*. Superbly researched and illustrated account of İstanbul's rich but neglected legacy of Art Nouveau architecture, in particular the works of Italian architect and longtime resident Raimondo D'Aronco. A nice corrective to the axiom that the city consists only of palaces, concrete towerblocks and crumbled wood terraces.

**Christa Beck & Christiane Forsting** *İstanbul: An Architectural Guide*. The guide to get if your interest in architecture extends as far as the city's often overlooked nineteenth- and twentieth-century buildings, but prohibitively priced.

**John Freely** *John Freely's İstanbul*. Freely is the doyen of modern writers on the city. In this copiously illustrated book he combines descriptions of many of its monuments, much of its history and a wealth of personal musings on a lifetime's wandering through its streets to great effect.

**Godfrey Goodwin** *A History of Ottoman Architecture*. The most comprehensive guide to Ottoman architecture, covering the whole of Turkey and providing a sound historical and ethno-geographical context for any Ottoman construction you care to name. Far too heavy to cart around, though. Goodwin's *Sinan: Ottoman Architecture and Its Values Today* provides fascinating insights into the architect, his life and influences.

**Chris Hellier & Francesco Venturi** *Splendours of the Bosphorus: Houses and Palaces of İstanbul*. Not the usual coffee-table fare – inviting photographs of interiors you'd never otherwise see are supported by intelligent text that puts the shoreline *yalı*s and opulent palaces into their social and artistic context.

**Richard Krautheimer** *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*. An excellent survey from the Pelican "History of Art" series.

**R.J. Mainstone** *Hagia Sophia: Architecture, Structure and liturgy of Justinian's Great Church*. A detailed study of one of the world's most important structures. A little technical and the illustrations are black and white only, but about as exhaustive as you can get on the subject.

**Hilary Sumner-Boyd & John Freely** *Strolling Through İstanbul*. First published in 1972; indispensable if you love history and even more so if you like to conduct your researches on foot. The authors' knowledge of, and love for, this incredible city shine through on every page. Copious sketch-maps and ground plans of monuments complement the informative text. Definitive.

**David Talbot Rice** *Art of the Byzantine Era*. A copiously illustrated general account of

Byzantine art from the age of Justinian to the fall of Constantinople, with a lengthy (85 pages) chapter on Constantinople. An excellent introduction to the wonders of Byzantine architecture, frescoes, mosaics and other works of art.

**J.M. Rogers** *Sinan: Makers of Islamic Civilisation* An eminiently readable and well-illustrated introduction to the greatest architect of the Ottoman period.

**Steven Runciman** *Byzantine Style and Civilisation* (o/p). Eleven centuries of Byzantine art in one small, fascinating paperback. Facts are presented in interesting contexts, theories are well argued. His *The Fall of Constantinople, 1453* remains a classic study of the event, though arguably superseded by Crowley's much more recent work (see p.340).

**Jane Taylor** *Imperial İstanbul*. Excellent, stone-by-stone guide, complete with site plans, of the major Ottoman monuments in Bursa and Edirne as well as İstanbul.

## Carpets

**Alastair Hull** *Kilims: The Complete Guide*. Comprehensive and thoroughly illustrated survey of Turkish kilims. His *Living with Kilims* is an excellent manual on how to use and care for (as opposed to museumize) kilims in interior-decorative situations.

**E. Heinrich Kirchheim** *Orient Stars*. The ultimate rug book; 250 colour plates, with excellent representation of classical Turkish carpets.

**James Opie** *Tribal Rugs*. Contains examples of Turkish and Kurdish rugs as part of a general Central Asian survey.

**Kurt Zipper & Claudia Fritzsche** *Oriental Rugs: Turkish*. Extensive discussions of weaving techniques, symbols, rug categories and the weavers themselves, along with a regional survey of distinctive patterns.



# Turkish fiction in translation

**Selçuk Altun** *Songs My Mother Never Taught Me*. As different from the populist works of Barbara Nadel (see p.347) as it's possible to get, this celebral İstanbul-set thriller is cold and clinical yet strangely compelling.

**Sait Faik** *A Dot on the Map* (o/p). A large collection of short stories, translated by various scholars, from the acknowledged Turkish master of the genre; most are set in and around İstanbul and the Sea of Marmara in the Twenties and Thirties.

**Moris Farhi** *Young Turk*. Ankara-born Farhi conjures up thirteen interwoven short stories in this delightful and moving evocation of İstanbul in the Thirties, Forties and Fifties. The cast of characters, whether they be Armenian, Greek, gypsy, Levantine or Turkish, are lovingly drawn, though the early coming-of-age tales are the most convincing.

**Yaşar Kemal** Until the advent of Orhan Pamuk, the best-known Turkish novelist in the West. His earlier works, the most famous of which is *Mehmed My Hawk*, are set in the foothills of the Toros mountains, but some of his later (and better) novels, are set in and around İstanbul, including *The Sea-Crossed Fishermen* (o/p), a psychological drama set

against the background of an İstanbul sea-fishing village, contrasting an old man's struggle to save the dolphins in the Sea of Marmara with the fortunes of a desperate hoodlum at bay in the city, and *The Birds Have Also Gone* (o/p), a symbolic, gentle story about bird-catchers near İstanbul.

**Orhan Pamuk** Internationally acclaimed, İstanbul-born writer and Turkey's first-ever Nobel Prize winner. His first work, *The White Castle*, was an excellent historical meditation in which a seventeenth-century Italian scholar is enslaved in the service of an Ottoman astronomer. The 1994-translated *The Black Book*, a mystery set in modern İstanbul, was more convoluted and surreal, and did well in Turkey. But Pamuk's 1998 *The New Life* was, with nearly 750,000 copies sold, the most successful Turkish novel ever, and had foreign critics in raptures. His subsequent *My Name is Red*, a late sixteenth-century Ottoman-set murder whodunnit, is marred by poor characterization and clunky translation. 2004's *Snow*, Pamuk's most controversial and political novel, is arguably his best. Set in the bleak, lonely northeastern outpost of Kars, it examines once-taboo topics such as political Islam and Kurdish nationalism.

**Elif Shafak** *The Flea Palace.* An engaging account, in the mould of Armistead Maupin, of the interwoven, tragicomic lives of the residents of a once-grand İstanbul apartment block. The author, of Turkish origin but born in Strasbourg, raised in Spain and now living in İstanbul, found herself, like Pamuk, drawing the ire of the establishment for her 2007 *The Bastard of İstanbul*. In the book an exuberant, if dysfunctional, Turkish family play host to an Armenian-American girl in search of her identity. Well-drawn female characters drive a narrative which inevitably delves into the dirty linen basket of pre-Republican Turkey. Prosecuted under article 301 for "insulting Turkishness"; the charges against her were eventually dropped.

**Latife Tekin** *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*. The hard underbelly of Turkish life is shown in this surreal allegory set in a shantytown founded on an Istanbul rubbish dump. By the same author, *Dear Shameless Death* examines how rural families cope with the move to the big city.

## Foreign literature set in Turkey

**Maureen Freely** *The Life of the Party*. Salacious, desperate cavortings of Bosphorus University faculty and their families during the 1960s, including a thinly disguised amalgam of the author's father, John Freely, and others. An excellent read.

**Jason Goodwin** *The Janissary Tree*. Racy historical thriller with all kinds of skulduggery being uncovered by Yashin, a eunuch detective. A very palatable entry into a nineteenth-century Istanbul on the verge of the Tanzimat reforms.

**Guneli Gün** *On the Road to Baghdad*. Although born in Turkey, the author of this captivating novel (based loosely on A Thousand and One Nights), is US-based and wrote her magical, partly İstanbul-set opus in English. Picaresque fantasy it may be, but its insights into Ottoman customs and attitudes ring true.

**Pierre Loti** *Aziyade*. For what's essentially romantic twaddle set in nineteenth-century Ottoman İstanbul, this is surprisingly racy, with

good insights into Ottoman life and Western attitudes to the Orient.

**Barbara Nadel** *A Chemical Prison, Arabesque, Harem*. Some people love Nadel's İstanbul-set thrillers, with doughty, chain-smoking Inspector İkrem and various associates trawling through the city's underworld, though others find them a tad unconvincing. They're well worth a try, though, conjuring up a side of the city barely imaginable to the average visitor.

**Edouard Roditi** *The Delights of Turkey* (o/p). Twenty short stories, by turns touching or bawdy, set in rural Turkey and İstanbul, by a Sephardic Jew of Turkish descent long-resident in Paris and America.

**Barry Unsworth** *The Rage of the Vulture*. Set in the twilight of the Ottoman Empire, with the paranoid Sultan Abdülhamid during the last year of his reign observed by a troubled British officer-with-a-past stationed in İstanbul.

# Poetry

**Coleman Barks** (trans.) *Like This*, *Open Secret* (with John Moyne) and *We are Three*. Three of various volumes of Rumi poetry, in lively if not necessarily literal translations.

**Yunus Emre** *The City of the Heart: Verses of Wisdom and Love*. Along with Rumi, the most highly regarded Turkish medieval Sufi poet; translated by Süha Faiz.

**Talat S. Halman** *Living Poets of Turkey* (Dost Yayınları, İstanbul). A wide selection of modern Turkish poetry, with an introduction giving the socio-political context. Halman also edited *Yunus Emre and His Mystical Poetry* (o/p), the works of the medieval Islamic folk poet, with explanatory essays.

**Nazım Hikmet** *Poems of Nazım Hikmet*. The newest (2002), most easily available and most reasonably priced anthology by the internationally renowned Turkish communist poet, who died in exile in 1963. *A Sad State of Freedom* (o/p) is a collection of gentle, moving poems also worth looking out for.

**Geoffrey L. Lewis** (trans.) *The Book of Dede Korkut*. The Turkish national epic, set in the age of the Oğuz Turks: by turns racy, formulaic, elegant and redundant.

# Language

# Language

Phrasebooks and dictionaries ..... 351

Pronunciation ..... 351

Words and phrases ..... 352

Food and drink ..... 355

A glossary of terms ..... 360

Acronyms and abbreviations ..... 363

# Language

**English** is widely studied in **Turkish** schools and has a great cachet, but away from tourist-dominated Sultanahmet or, to a lesser extent, sophisticated Beyoğlu, you won't come across many people who speak very much of it. It pays to learn as much as you can, especially as all Turks, even cosmopolitan İstanbullus, greatly appreciate foreigners who show enough interest and courtesy to learn at least **basic greetings**. The main advantages of the language from the learner's point of view are that it's phonetically spelt and (almost always) grammatically regular. The disadvantages are that the vocabulary is unrelated to any language you're likely to have encountered (unless you're conversant in Arabic or Persian), and the grammar, relying heavily on suffixes, gets more alien the further you delve into it. Concepts like vowel harmony further complicate matters; trying to grasp at least the basics, though, is well worth the effort.

## Phrasebooks and dictionaries

For a straightforward **phrasebook**, look no further than *Turkish: A Rough Guide Phrasebook* (Rough Guides), with useful two-way glossaries and a brief and simple grammar section. To learn more, David Pollard and Asuman Çelen-Pollard's *Teach Yourself Turkish* (Hodder and Stoughton Ltd, UK; NTC Publishing Group, US) is very good, and has an accompanying CD. Alternatively, there's the slimmer and cheaper *Turkish in Three Months* (Hugo's Language Books). The best series published in Turkey is a set of three textbooks and tapes, *Türkçe Öğreniyoruz (Engin Yayınevi)*, available in good bookshops in İstanbul and Ankara.

Among widely available Turkish **dictionaries**, the best are probably the Langenscheidt/Lilliput miniature or coat-pocket sizes, or the *Concise Oxford Turkish Dictionary* (distributed in Turkey by ABC Kitabevi), a hardback suitable for serious students. In Turkey, locally produced Redhouse dictionaries are the best value, though their fine print can be hard to read.

## Pronunciation

**Pronunciation** in Turkish is worth mastering, since once you've got it the phonetic spelling helps you progress fast. The following letters differ significantly from English pronunciation.

**Aa** short a similar to that in f**a**r.
**Ee** as in b**e**t.
**Iı** unstressed vowel similar to the vestigial sound between the **b** and **l** of probable.
**İi** as in sk**i**.
**Oo** as in n**o**te.
**Öö** like ur in b**ur**n.
**Uu** as in bl**ue**.
**Üü** like ew in f**ew**.
**Cc** like j in **j**elly.
**Çç** like ch in **ch**at.
**Gg** hard g as in **g**et.

**Ğğ** generally silent, but either lengthens the preceding vowel or, when between two vowels approximates a **y** sound.

**Hh** as in **h**en, never silent.

**Jj** like the s in plea**s**ure.

**Şş** like sh in **sh**ape.

**Vv** soft, somewhere between **v** and **w**.

## Vowel harmony

Turkish generally tries to adhere to the principle of **vowel harmony**, whereby words contain either the so-called "back" vowels a, ı, o and u, or the "front" vowels e, i, ö and ü, but rarely mix the two types. A small number of native Turkish words (eg *anne*, mother; *kardeş*, brother) violate the norms of vowel harmony, as do compound words, eg *bugün*, "today", formed from *bu* (this) and *gün* (day), and foreign (mainly from Arabic, Persian and French) loan words.

# Words and phrases

## Basics

| | |
|---|---|
| **Mr; follows first name** | Bey |
| **Miss; precedes first name** | Bayan |
| **Mrs (literally lady), polite Ottoman title; follows first name** | Hanım |
| **Honorific of someone who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca** | Hacı |
| **Good morning** | Günaydın |
| **Good afternoon** | İyi günler |
| **Good evening** | İyi akşamlar |
| **Good night** | İyi geceler |
| **Hello** | Merhab |
| **Goodbye** | Allahaısmarladık |
| **Yes** | Evet |
| **No** | Hayır |
| **No (there isn't any)** | Yok |
| **Please** | Lütfen |
| **Thank you** | Teşekkür ederim/ Mersi/Sağol |
| **You're welcome, that's OK** | Bir şey değil |
| **How are you?** | Nasılsınız? Nasılsın? Ne haber? |
| **I'm fine (thank you)** | (Sağol) İyiyim/İyilik sağlık |
| **Do you speak English?** | İngilizce biliyormusunuz? |
| **I don't understand (Turkish)** | Anlamadım/Türkçe anlamıyorum |
| **I don't know** | Bilmiyorum |
| **I beg your pardon, sorry** | Affedersiniz |
| **Excuse me (in a crowd)** | Pardon |
| **I'm English/ Scottish/ Welsh/ Irish/ American/ Australian/ from New Zealand** | İngilizim/ İskoçyalım/ Gallerliyim/ İrlandalıyım/ Amerikalıyım/ Avustralyalım/ Yeni Zelandlıyım |
| **I live in …** | … 'de/da oturuyorum |
| **Today** | Bugün |
| **Tomorrow** | Yarın |
| **The day after tomorrow** | Öbür gün/Ertesi gün |
| **Yesterday** | Dün |
| **Now** | Şimdi |
| **Later** | Sonra |
| **Wait a minute!** | Bir dakika bekle! |
| **In the morning** | Sabahleyin |
| **In the afternoon** | Oğle'den sonra |
| **In the evening** | Akşamleyin |
| **Here/there/over there** | Bur(a)da/Şur(a)da/ Or(a)da |
| **Good/bad** | İyi/Kötü, Fena |
| **Big/small** | Büyük/Küçük |
| **Cheap/expensive** | Ucuz/Pahalı |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Early/late** | Erken/Geç |
| **Hot/cold** | Sıcak/Soğuk |
| **Near/far** | Yakın/Uzak |
| **Vacant/occupied** | Boş/Dolu |
| **Quickly/slowly** | Hızlı/Yavaş |
| **With/without (milk)** | (Süt)lü/(Süt)süz |
| **With/without (meat)** | (Et)li/(Et)siz |
| **Enough** | Yeter |

## Some common signs

| | |
|---|---|
| **Entrance/exit** | Giriş/Çıkış |
| **Free/paid entrance** | Giriş ücretsiz/ Ücretlidir |
| **Gentlemen** | Bay(lar) |
| **Ladies** | Bayanlar |
| **WC** | WC/Tuvalet/Umumî |
| **Open/closed** | Açık/Kapalı |
| **Arrivals/departures** | Varış/Kalkış |
| **Pull/push** | Çekiniz/İtiniz |
| **Drinking water** | İçilebilir su |
| **To let/for hire** | Kiralık |
| **Foreign exchange** | Kambiyo |
| **Beware** | Dikkat |
| **First aid** | İlk yardım |
| **No smoking** | Sigara içilmez |
| **Stop, halt** | Dur |
| **Military Area** | Askeri bölge |
| **Entry Forbidden** | Girmek yasaktır |
| **No entry without a woman** | Damsız girilmez |
| **Please take off your shoes** | Lütfen ayakkabılarınızı çıkartınız |

## Accommodation

| | |
|---|---|
| **Hotel** | Hotel/otel |
| **Pension, inn** | Pansiyon |
| **Do you have a room?** | Boş odanız var mı? |
| **Single/double/triple** | Tek/çift/üç kişilik |
| **Do you have a double room for one/two/ three nights?** | Bir/iki/üç gecelik çift yataklı odanızvar mı? |
| **With a double bed** | Fransiz yataklı |
| **With a shower** | Duşlu |
| **Hot water** | Sıcak su |
| **Can I see it?** | Bakabilirmiyim? |
| **I have a booking** | Reservasyonum var |

## Questions and directions

| | |
|---|---|
| **Where is the … ?** | … nerede? |
| **When?** | Ne zaman? |
| **What/What is it?** | Ne/Ne dir? |
| **How much (does it cost)?** | Ne kadar? |
| **How many?** | Kaç tane? |
| **Why?** | Niye? |
| **What time is it?** | Saat kaç? |
| **How do I get to … ?** | … 'a/e nasıl giderim? |
| **How far is it to … ?** | … 'a/e ne kadar uzak? |
| **What time does it open?** | Kaçta açılıcak? |
| **What time does it close?** | Kaçta kapanacak? |
| **What's it called in Turkish?** | Türkcesi ne dir? or, Turkçe nasıl söylersiniz? |
| **Left** | Sol |
| **Right** | Sağ |
| **Straight ahead** | Doğru, direk |

## Travelling

| | |
|---|---|
| **Aeroplane** | Uçak |
| **Bus** | Otobus |
| **Train** | Tren |
| **Car** | Araba |
| **Taxi** | Taksi |
| **Bicycle** | Bisiklet |
| **Ferry** | Feribot, vapur |
| **Catamaran, sea bus** | Deniz otobüsü |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Hitchhiking** | Otostop |
| **On foot** | Yaya |
| **Airport** | Havalimani or havaalanı |
| **Bus station** | Otogar |
| **Railway station** | Gar, tren ıstasyonu |
| **Ferry terminal/jetty** | İskele |
| **Harbour** | Liman |
| **A ticket to …** | … 'a bir bilet |
| **One-way** | Gidiş, sadece |
| **Return** | Gidiş-dönüş |
| **What time does it leave?** | Kaçta kalkıyor? |
| **Can I book a seat?** | Reservasyon yapabılırmıyım? |
| **How many kilometres is it?** | Kaç kilometredir? |
| **How long does it take?** | Ne kadar sürer? |
| **Which bus goes to …?** | Hangi otobus … 'a gider? |
| **Which road leads to …?** | Hangi yol … 'a çıkar? |
| **Can I get out at a convenient place?** | Müsait bir yerde inebilirmiyim? |
| **Parking/No parking** | Park yapılır/Park yapılmaz |
| **One-way street** | Tek yön |
| **No entry** | Araç giremez |
| **No through road** | Çıkmaz sokak |
| **Slow down** | Yavaşla |
| **Road closed** | Yol kapalı |

## Days of the week, months and seasons

| | |
|---|---|
| **Sunday** | Pazar |
| **Monday** | Pazartesi |
| **Tuesday** | Salı |
| **Wednesday** | Çarşamba |
| **Thursday** | Perşembe |
| **Friday** | Cuma |
| **Saturday** | Cumartesi |
| **January** | Ocak |
| **February** | Subat |
| **March** | Mart |
| **April** | Nisan |
| **May** | Mayıs |
| **June** | Haziran |
| **July** | Temmuz |
| **August** | Ağustos |
| **September** | Eylül |
| **October** | Ekim |
| **November** | Kasım |
| **December** | Aralık |
| **Spring** | İlkbahar |
| **Summer** | Yaz |
| **Autumn** | Sonbahar |
| **Winter** | Kış |

## Numbers

| | |
|---|---|
| **1** | Bir |
| **2** | İki |
| **3** | Üç |
| **4** | Dört |
| **5** | Beş |
| **6** | Altı |
| **7** | Yedi |
| **8** | Sekiz |
| **9** | Dokuz |
| **10** | On |
| **11** | On bir |
| **12** | On iki |
| **13** | On üç |
| **20** | Yirmi |
| **30** | Otuz |
| **40** | Kırk |
| **50** | Elli |
| **60** | Altmış |
| **70** | Yetmiş |
| **80** | Seksen |
| **90** | Doksan |
| **100** | Yüz |
| **140** | Yüz kırk |
| **200** | İki yüz |
| **700** | Yedi yüz |
| **1000** | Bin |
| **100,000** | Yüz bin |
| **500,000** | Beşyüz bin |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1,000,000 | Bir milyon |
| Compounded numbers tend to be run together in spelling: 50,784 | Ellibinyediyüzsek sendört |

**The most important ordinals, as in class of train, restaurant, etc, are:**

| | |
|---|---|
| First | Birinci |
| Second | İkinci |
| Third | Üçüncü |

## Time conventions

| | |
|---|---|
| (At) 3 o'clock | Saat üç(ta) |
| 2 hours (duration) | İki saat |
| Half hour (duration) | Yarım saat |
| 5.30 | Beş büçük |
| It's 8.10 | Sekizi on geçiyor |
| It's 10.45 | On bire çeyrek var |
| At 8.10 | Sekizi on geçe |
| At 10.45 | On bire çeyrek kala |

# Food and drink

## Basics

| | |
|---|---|
| Bal | Honey |
| Bulgur | Cracked wheat |
| Buz | Ice |
| Çavdar | Rye |
| Dereotu | Dill |
| Ekmek | Bread |
| Karabiber | Black pepper |
| Kekik | Oregano |
| Kepekli | Wholegrain |
| Makarna | Pasta (noodles) |
| Mısır | Corn |
| Nane | Mint |
| Pilav, pirinç | Rice |
| Şeker | Sugar |
| Sirke | Vinegar |
| Su | Water |
| Süt | Milk |
| Tereyağı | Butter |
| Tuz | Salt |
| Yağ | Oil |
| Yoğurt | Yoghurt |
| Yumurta | Eggs |

## Useful words

| | |
|---|---|
| Bakarmısınız! | Polite way of getting waiter's attention |
| Bardak | Glass |
| Başka bir ... | Another ... |
| Bıçak | Knife |
| Çatal | Fork |
| Garsoniye | "Waiter's" charge |
| Hesap | Bill, check |
| Kaşık | Spoon |
| Peçete | Napkin |
| Servis ücreti | Service charge |
| Tabak | Plate |

## Cooking terms

| | |
|---|---|
| Acı | Hot, spicy |
| Etli | Containing meat |
| Etli mi? | Does it contain meat? |
| Etsiz yemek var mı? | Do you have any meatless food? |
| Ezme | Paste; any mashed or crushed dip |
| Fırında(n) | Baked |
| Haşlama | Meat stew without oil, sometimes with vegetables |
| Izgarada(n), ızgarası | Grilled |
| Kıymalı | With minced meat |
| Kızartma | Fried then chilled |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Peynirli, kaşarlı** | With cheese |
| **Pilaki** | Vinaigrette, marinated |
| **Pişmemiş** | Raw |
| **Sıcak/soğuk** | Hot/cold |
| **Soslu, salçalı** | In red sauce |
| **Sucuklu** | With sausage |
| **Tava, sahanda** | Deep-fried, fried |
| **Yoğurtlu** | In yoghurt sauce |
| **Yumurtalı** | With egg (eg *pide*) |
| **Zeytinyağlı** | Vegetables cooked in their own juices, spices and olive oil (*zeytin yağı*), then allowed to steep and chill |

## Soup (*Çorba*)

| | |
|---|---|
| **Düğün** | "Wedding": egg and lemon |
| **Ezo gelin** | Rice and vegetable broth |
| **İşkembe** | Tripe |
| **Mercimek** | Lentil |
| **Paça** | Trotters |
| **Tarhana** | Yoghurt, soured grain and spice |
| **Tavuk** | Chicken |
| **Yayla** | Similar to *tarhana*, with mint |
| **Yoğurt** | Yoghurt, rice and celery greens |

## Appetizers (*Meze* or *Zeytinyağlı*)

| | |
|---|---|
| **Antep** or **acılı ezmesi** | Hot chilli mash with garlic, parsley, lettuce, onion |
| **Barbunya** | Red kidney beans, marinated |
| **Beyin salatası** | Lamb-brains salad |
| **Börülce** | Black-eyed peas, in the pod |
| **Cacık** | Yoghurt, grated cucumber and herb dip |
| **Cinter** | Chanterelle mushrooms |
| **Çoban salatası** | Chopped tomato, cucumber, parsley, pepper and onion salad |
| **Deniz börülce** | Sea samphire |
| **Deniz otu** | Rock samphire |
| **Haydarı** | Dense yoghurt and garlic dip |
| **İçli köfte** | Usually meat in a spicy bulgur crust |
| **İmam bayıldı** | Cold baked aubergine, onion and tomato |
| **Mantar sote** | Sautéed mushrooms |
| **Mücver** | Courgette fritters |
| **Patlıcan ezmesi** | Aubergine pâté |
| **Piyaz** | White haricots, onions and parsley vinaigrette |
| **Roka** | Rocket greens |
| **Rus salatası** | "Russian" salad – potatoes, peas, gherkins in mayonnaise |
| **Semizotu** | Purslane, usually mixed into yoghurt |
| **Sigara böreği** | Cheese-filled pastry "cigarettes" |
| **Tarama** | Pink fish-roe |
| **Tere** | Similar, but "hotter", than rocket |
| **Turşu** | Pickled vegetables |
| **Yaprak dolması** or **yılancı dolması** | Stuffed vine-leaves |
| **Yeşil salata** | Green salad |
| **Zeytin** | Olives |

## Meat (*Et*) and poultry (*Beyaz et*)

| | |
|---|---|
| **Adana kebap** | Spicy Arab-style kebab |
| **Beyti** | Minced kebab wrapped in pitta |
| **Billur, koç yumurtası** | Testicle |
| **Böbrek** | Kidney |
| **Bonfile** | Small steak |
| **Ciğer** | Liver |
| **Çöp kebap** | Literally, "rubbish kebab" – tiny chunks of offal or lamb |
| **Dana eti** | Veal |
| **Dil** | Tongue |
| **Döner kebap** | Fatty lamb from a rotisseried cone of meat slabs |

| | |
|---|---|
| **İnegöl köfte** | Mince rissoles |
| **İskender** or **Bursa kebap** | Döner drenched in yoghurt and sauce |
| **Kaburga** | Spare ribs, or ribs stuffed with *pilaf* rice |
| **Kağıt kebap** | Meat and vegetables baked in wax paper |
| **Kanat** | Chicken wing |
| **Karışık ızgara** | Mixed grill |
| **Keçi** | Goat |
| **Kiremit kebap** | Meat served on a hot ceramic tray (*kiremit* = tile) |
| **Köfte** | Meatballs |
| **Koyun** | Mutton |
| **Kuzu** | Lamb |
| **Pastırma** | Cured, spicy meat |
| **Piliç** | Roasting chicken |
| **Pirzola** | Lamb chop, cutlet |
| **Saray kebap** | Rissoles baked with vegetables |
| **Sığır** | Beef |
| **Şiş kebap** | Shish kebab |
| **Tandır kebap** | Side of tender, boneless lamb baked in outdoor oven |
| **Tavuk** | Boiling chicken |
| **Yürek** | Heart |

## Fish (*Balık*) and seafood

| | |
|---|---|
| **Ahtapod** | Octopus |
| **Alabalık** | Trout |
| **Barbunya, tekir** | Red mullet, small and large respectively |
| **Çineköp** | Baby *lüfer*; not very esteemed |
| **Çipura** | Gilt-head bream |
| **Hamsi** | Anchovy (Black Sea) |
| **İsparoz** | Annular bream |
| **İstakoz** | Aegean lobster |
| **İstavrit** | Horse mackerel |
| **Kalamar** | Squid |
| **Kalkan** | Turbot |
| **Karagöz** | Two-banded bream |
| **Karides** | Prawns |
| **Kefal** | Grey mullet (Aegean) |
| **Kılıç** | Swordfish |
| **Kolyoz** | Club mackerel |
| **Levrek** | Bass; usually farmed |
| **Lüfer** | Bluefish (autumn, İstanbul) |
| **Mercan** | Pandora or red bream; wild |
| **Mezgit** | Whitebait |
| **Midye** | Mussel |
| **Orfoz** | Giant grouper |
| **Palamut, torik** | Small/large bonito respectively |
| **Sardalya** | Sardine |
| **Yengeç** | Crab |

## Vegetables (*Sebze*)

| | |
|---|---|
| **Acı biber** | Hot chillis |
| **Bakla** | Broad beans |
| **Bamya** | Okra or lady's finger |
| **Bezelye** | Peas |
| **Domates** | Tomato |
| **Enginar** | Artichoke |
| **Havuç** | Carrot |
| **Ispanak** | Spinach |
| **Kabak** | Courgette, zucchini |
| **Karnabahar** | Cauliflower |
| **Kuru fasulye** | White haricots |
| **Kuşkonmaz** | Asparagus |
| **Lahana** | Cabbage (usually stuffed) |
| **Mantar** | Mushrooms |
| **Marul** | Lettuce |
| **Maydanoz** | Parsley |
| **Nohut** | Chickpeas |
| **Patates** | Potato |
| **Patlıcan** | Aubergine, eggplant |
| **Roka, tere** | Rocket greens |
| **Salatalık** | Cucumber |
| **Sarımsak, sarmısak** | Garlic |
| **Sivri biber** | Skinny peppers, hot or mild |
| **Soğan** | Onion |
| **Taze fasulye** | French beans |
| **Turp** | Radish |

## Snacks

| | |
|---|---|
| **Badem** | Almonds |
| **Börek** | Rich layered pastry with varied fillings |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Çerez** | Bar nibbles (nuts, salted dried pulses or sunflower/melon seeds) |
| **Çeviz** | Walnuts |
| **Cezer(i)ye** | Carrot, honey and nut bar |
| **Çiğ börek** | "Inflated" hollow turnovers |
| **Dürüm** | Pitta-like dough roll used to wrap meat for takeaway |
| **Fındık** | Hazelnuts |
| **Gözleme** | Village chappati with various savoury fillings |
| **Kestane** | Chestnuts |
| **Kokoreç** | Mixed innard roulade |
| **Kuru üzüm** | Raisins |
| **Lahmacun** | Round Arabic "pizza" |
| **Leblebi** | Roasted chickpeas |
| **Midye dolması** | Mussels stuffed with rice, allspice and pine nuts |
| **Mısır** | Roasted and spiced corn |
| **Pestil** | Sheet-pressed dried fruit |
| **Pide** | Elongated Turkish "pizza" |
| **Poğaça** | Soft bread, plain or stuffed with cheese or spicy potato |
| **Antep** or **Şam fıstık** | Pistachios |
| **Simit** | Bread rings studded with sesame seeds |
| **Su börek** | "Water *börek*" – runny cheese between layers of filo |
| **Yer fıstığı** | Peanuts |

## Typical dishes

| | |
|---|---|
| **Güveç** | Meat and vegetable clay-pot casserole |
| **İç pilav** | Spicy rice |
| **Karnıyarık** | Aubergine and meat dish, firmer than *mussaka* |
| **Lahana sarma** | Black-Sea version of *dolma*, with baby cabbage leaves |
| **Mantı** | Mince-stuffed "ravioli" topped with yoghurt and chilli oil |
| **Menemen** | Stir-fried omelette with tomatoes and peppers |
| **Saç kavurma** | "Wok"-fried medley |
| **Şakşuka** | Aubergine, tomato and other vegetable fry-up |
| **Sebze turlu** | Vegetable stew |
| **Tas kebap** | Meat and vegetable stew |
| **Türlü sebze** | Alias of *tas kebap* |

## Cheese (*Peynir*)

| | |
|---|---|
| **Beyaz** | White; like Greek feta |
| **Çerkez** | Like Edam |
| **Dil** | Like mozzarella or string cheese |
| **Kaşar** | Kasseri, variably aged |
| **Otlu peynir** | Herb-flavoured cheese |
| **Tulum** | Dry, crumbly, cheese made in a goatskin |

## Fruit (*Meyve*)

| | |
|---|---|
| **Ahududu** | Raspberry |
| **Armut** | Pear |
| **Ayva** | Quince |
| **Böğürtlen** | Blackberry |
| **Çilek** | Strawberry |
| **Dut** | Mulberry |
| **Elma** | Apple |
| **Erik** | Plum |
| **Hurma** | Persimmon or date |
| **İncir** | Figs |
| **Karpuz** | Watermelon |
| **Kavun** | Persian melon |
| **Kayısı** | Apricot |
| **Kiraz** | Sweet cherry |
| **Limon** | Lemon |
| **Mandalin** | Tangerine |
| **Muz** | Banana |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Nar** | Pomegranate |
| **Portakal** | Orange |
| **Şeftali** | Peach (June) |
| **Üzüm** | Grape |
| **Vişne** | Sour cherry |
| **Yarma** | Bursa peach (Aug) |

## Sweets (*Tatlı*)

| | |
|---|---|
| **Acı badem** | Giant almond biscuit |
| **Aşure** | Pulse, wheat, fruit and nut "soup" |
| **Baklava** | Layered honey-and-nut pie |
| **Dondurma** | Ice cream |
| **Fırın sütlaç** | Baked rice pudding |
| **İrmik helvası** | Semolina and nut *helva* |
| **Kabak tatlısı** | Baked orange-fleshed squash topped with nuts and *kaymak* |
| **Kadayıf** | "Shredded wheat" in syrup |
| **Kadın göbeği** | Doughnut in syrup |
| **Kaymak** | Clotted cream |
| **Kazandibi** | Browned residue of *tavukgöğsü* |
| **Keşkül** | Vanilla-almond custard |
| **Komposto** | Stewed fruit |
| **Krem karamel** | Crème caramel |
| **Kurabiye** | Generic term for dry, shortbread-type biscuit |
| **Lokum** | Turkish Delight |
| **Muhallebi** | Rice flour and rosewater pudding |
| **Mustafakemalpaşa** | Syrup-soaked dumpling |
| **Pasta** | Any pastry or cake |
| **Süpangile** | Ultra-rich chocolate pudding, with sponge or a biscuit embedded |
| **Sütlaç** | Rice pudding |
| **Tahin helvası** | Sesame-paste *helva* |
| **Tavukgöğsü** | Chicken fibre, milk and semolina taffy |

## Drinks

| | |
|---|---|
| **Ada çayı** | Sage tea |
| **Ayran** | Salted yoghurt drink |
| **Bira** | Beer |
| **Boza** | Fermented millet drink |
| **Çay** | Tea |
| **Kahve** | Coffee |
| **Maden suyu** | Mineral water (fizzy) |
| **Memba suyu** | Spring water (non-fizzy) |
| **Musluk su** | Tap water |
| **Meyva suyu** | Fruit juice |
| **Papatya çayı** | Camomile tea |
| **Rakı** | Aniseed-flavoured spirit |
| **Sahlep** | Orchid-root-powder drink |
| **Şarap** | Wine |

# A glossary of terms

Many of the **Turkish terms** below will change their form according to their grammatical declension (eg *ada*, island, but *Eşek Adası*, Donkey Island); the genitive suffix is displayed in brackets, or the form written separately when appropriate.

## General medieval and modern Turkish terms

**Ada(sı)** Island.

**Ağa** A minor rank of nobility in the Ottoman Empire, and still a term of respect applied to a local worthy; follows the name (eg Ismail Ağa).

**Ayazma** Sacred spring.

**Bahçe(si)** Garden.

**Bekçi** Caretaker or warden at an archeological site or monument.

**Belediye(si)** Municipality – both the corporation and the actual town hall, for a community of over 2000 inhabitants.

**Bey** Another minor Ottoman title like *ağa*, still in use; follows the first name.

**Cami(i)** Mosque.

**Çarşaf** A bedsheet – or the full-length, baggy dress-with-hood worn by religious Turkish women.

**Çarşı(sı)** Bazaar, market.

**Çay(ı)** 1) Tea, the national drink; 2) a stream or small river.

**Çeşme(si)** Street-corner fountain.

**Çıkmaz(ı)** Dead-end alley.

**Dağ(ı)** Mount.

**Dağlar(ı)** Mountains.

**Dolmuş** Literally "filled" – the shared-taxi system; some confusing, though decreasing, overlap with "minibus", since not all of the latter are *dolmuşes*, and vice versa.

**Eski** Old (frequent modifier of place names).

**Ezan** The Muslim call to prayer

**Gazı** Warrior for the (Islamic) faith; also a common epithet of Atatürk.

**Gazino** Open-air nightclub, usually adorned with coloured lights and featuring live or taped *arabesk* or taverna music.

**Gecekondu** Literally "founded-by-night" – a reference to the Ottoman law whereby houses begun in darkness which had acquired a roof and four walls by dawn were inviolable.

**Gişe** Ticket window or booth.

**Göl(ü)** Lake.

**Hacı** Honorific of someone who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca; precedes the name, though rarely used conversationally as a term of address.

**Hamam(ı)** Turkish bath.

**Han(ı)** Traditionally a tradesmen's hall, or an urban inn; now can also mean an office block.

**Harem** The women's quarters in Ottoman residences.

**Hastane(si)** Hospital.

**Hicrî** The Muslim dating system, beginning with Mohammed's flight to Medina in 622 AD, and based on the thirteen-month lunar calendar; approximately six centuries behind the Miladî calendar. Abbreviated "H." on monuments and inscriptions.

**Hittite** First great civilization (c.1800–1200 BC) to emerge in Anatolia.

**Hoca** Teacher in charge of religious instruction for children.

**Ilıca** Hot spring.

**İmam** Usually just the prayer leader at a mosque, though it can mean a more important spiritual authority.

**Irmak** River, eg Yeşılırmak (Green River).

**İl(i)** Province, the largest administrative division in Turkey, subdivided into *ilçe*s (counties or districts).

**İskele(si)** Jetty, dock.

**Janissary** One of the sultan's praetorian guard, levied exclusively from the Christian communities of the Balkans between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries; *yeniceri* in Turkish. Famous for their devotion to the Bektaşi order, outlandish headgear and marching music.

**Kaplıca** Developed hot springs, spa.

**Kervansaray(ı)** Strategically located "hotel", often Selçuk, for pack animals and men on Anatolian trade routes; some overlap with *han*.

**Kilim** Flat-weave rug without a pile.

**Kilise(si)** Church.

**Konak** Large private residence, also the main government building of a province or city; genitive form *konağı*.

**Lokanta** Restaurant; rendition of the Italian *locanda*.

**Mahalle(si)** District or neighbourhood.

**Meydan(ı)** Public square or plaza.

**Meyhane** Tavern where alcohol and *meze*-type food are served together.

**Meze** Small plate of often vegetable-based appetizers, typically fried, puréed and/or marinated; from the Arabic *maza*.

**Miladî** The Christian year-numbering system; abbreviated "M." on inscriptions and monuments.

**Muezzin** Man who pronounces call to prayer (*ezan*) from the minaret of a mosque.

**Muhtar** Village headman.

**Muhtarlık** The office of the *muhtar*, both in the abstract and concrete sense; also designates the status of any community of under 2000.

**Namaz** The Muslim rite of prayer, performed five times daily.

**Nehir (Nehri)** River.

**Otogar** Bus station.

**Pansiyon** Typical budget to mid-priced accommodation.

**Ramadan** The Muslim month of fasting and prayer; spelt Ramazan in Turkish.

**Saz** Long-necked, fretted stringed instrument central to Turkish folk ballads and Alevî/Bektaşi devotional music.

**Şehzade** Prince, heir apparent.

**Selçuk** The first centralized, Muslim Turkish state based in Anatolia, lasting from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries.

**Sema** A dervish ceremony; thus *semahane*, a hall where such ceremonies are conducted.

**Şeyh** Head of a Sufi order.

**Sufi** Dervish – more properly an adherent of one of the heterodox mystical branches of Islam. In Turkey the most important sects were (and to some extent still are) the Bektaşi, Mevlevî, Helveti, Nakşibendi, Cerrahi and Kadiri orders.

**Sultan valide** The Sultan's mother.

**Tuğra** Monogram or seal of a sultan.

**Ulema** The corps of Islamic scholars and authorities in Ottoman times.

**Vakıf** Islamic religious trust or foundation, responsible for social welfare and upkeep of religious buildings.

**Vezir** Vizier, the principal Ottoman minister of state, responsible for the day-to-day running of the empire.

**Vilayet(ı)** Formal word for province; also a common term for the provincial headquarters building itself.

**Yeni** New (common component of Turkish place names).

## Architectural/artistic terms

**Apse** Curved or polygonal recess at the altar end of a church.

**Arasta** Marketplace built into the foundations of a mosque, a portion of whose revenues goes to the upkeep of the latter.

**Bedesten(ı)** Covered market hall for valuable goods, often lockable.

**Camekân** Changing rooms in a *hamam*.

**Capital** The top, often ornamented, of a column.

**Deesis** or **Deisis** Portrayal of Christ between the Virgin and John the Baptist.

**Exedra** Semicircular niche.

**Eyvan** Domed side-chamber of an Ottoman religious building; also applies to three-sided alcoves in secular mansions.

**Göbek taşı** Literally "navel stone" – the hot central platform of a *hamam*.

**Halvet** Semi-private corner rooms in a *hamam*.

**Hararet** The hottest room of a *hamam*.

**Hisar** Castle, fort.

**İmaret(ı)** Soup kitchen and hostel for dervishes and wayfarers, usually attached to a *medrese*.

**Kale(si)** Castle, fort.

**Kapı(sı)** Gate, door.

**Kemer** Series of vaults, or an aqueduct.

**Khatchkar** An ornate relief-carving centred around stylized crosses, on the walls of Armenian churches; also a free-standing cruciform gravestone so carved.

**Köşk(ü)** Kiosk, pavilion, gazebo, folly.

**Kubbe** Dome, cupola.

**Kule(si)** Tower, turret.

**Kurna** Hewn stone basin in a *hamam*.

**Külliye(si)** Building complex – term for a mosque and dependent buildings taken as a whole.

**Kümbet** Vault, dome; by analogy the cylindrical "hatted" Selçuk tombs of central Anatolia.

**Medrese(si)** Islamic theological academy.

**Mescit** Small mosque with no *mimber*; Islamic equivalent of a chapel; genitive *mescidi*.

**Mezar(i)** Grave, tomb; thus *mezarlık*, cemetery.

**Mihrab** Niche in a mosque indicating the direction of Mecca, and prayer.

**Mimber** Pulpit in a mosque, from where the *imam* delivers homilies; often beautifully carved in wood or stone.

**Minare(si)** Turkish for "minaret", the tower from which the call to prayer is delivered.

**Narthex** Vestibule or entrance hall of a church; also exonarthex, the outer vestibule when there is more than one.

**Nave** The principal lengthwise aisle of a church.

**Nymphaeum** Ornate, multistoreyed facade surrounding a public fountain in a classical-era city.

**Pendentive** Curved, triangular surface, by means of which a dome can be supported over a square ground-plan.

**Pier** A mass of supportive masonry.

**Porphyry** A hard red or purple rock containing mineral crystals.

**Revetment** Facing of stone, marble or tile on a wall.

**Saray(ı)** Palace.

**Sebil** Public drinking fountain, either free-standing or built into the wall of an Ottoman structure.

**Selamlık** Area where men receive guests in any sort of dwelling.

**Son cemaat yeri** Literally "Place of the last congregation" – a mosque porch where latecomers pray.

**Synthronon** Semicircular seating for clergy, usually in the apse of a Byzantine church.

**Şadırvan** Ritual ablutions fountain of a mosque.

**Şerefe** Balcony of a minaret.

**Tabhane** Hospice for travelling dervishes or *ahis*, often housed in an *eyvan*.

**Tapınak** Alternative term for "temple" at archeological sites; genitive *tapınağı*.

**Tekke(si)** Gathering place of a Sufi order.

**Transept** The "wings" of a church, extending north and south perpendicular to the nave.

**Türbe(si)** Free-standing, usually domed, tomb.

**Tympanum** The surface, often adorned, enclosed by the top of an arch; found in churches or more ancient ruins.

**Verd-antique** Type of green marble.

**Voussoir** Stripes of wedge-shaped blocks at the edge of an arch.

**Yalı** Ornate wooden residence along the Bosphorus.

**Zaviye** Mosque built specifically as a hospice for dervishes, usually along a T-plan.

**Zhamatoun** Chapter (council) hall of an Armenian church.

# Acronyms and abbreviations

**AKP** *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* or Justice and Development Party; Islamist movement headed by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, which currently dominates parliament with a two-thirds majority.

**AŞ** Initials of *Anonim Şirket*, Turkish equivalent of "Ltd" or "Inc".

**Bul** Standard abbreviation for *bulvar(ı)* (boulevard).

**Cad** Standard abbreviation for *cadde(si)* (avenue).

**CHP** *Cumhuriyetçi Halk Partisi* or Republican People's Party (RPP) – founded by Atatürk, disbanded in 1980, revived in 1992, headed now by Deniz Baykal; the minority party in parliament at present.

**IDO** *İstanbul Deniz Ötöbüsleri* Company running İstanbul's ferry and sea bus services.

**KDV** Acronym of the Turkish VAT.

**MHP** *Milliyet Hareket Partisi* or National Action Party; originally quasi-fascist group later rebranded – and headed – by Devlet Bahçeli.

**PKK** *Partia Karkaris Kurdistan* or Kurdish Workers' Party, actually an armed guerilla/terrorist movement, formed in 1978 and still present in southeast Turkey.

**PTT** *Post Telefon ve Telegraf*, the joint postal, telegraph and (formerly) phone service in Turkey, and by extension its offices.

**Sok** Abbreviation for *sokak* (*sokağı*) or street.

**THY** *Türk Hava Yolları*, Turkish Airways.

**TIR** (pronounced "turr" locally) Transport International Routière – large, slow trucks, your greatest open-road hazard.

**TRT** Acronym of *Türk Radyo ve Televizyon*, the Turkish public-broadcasting corporation.

**TT** *Türk Telekom* – entity hived off from the PTT, subsequently privatized and providing exclusively telecommunications services.

# Small print and

# Index

## A Rough Guide to Rough Guides

Published in 1982, the first Rough Guide – to Greece – was a student scheme that became a publishing phenomenon. Mark Ellingham, a recent graduate in English from Bristol University, had been travelling in Greece the previous summer and couldn't find the right guidebook. With a small group of friends he wrote his own guide, combining a highly contemporary, journalistic style with a thoroughly practical approach to travellers' needs.

The immediate success of the book spawned a series that rapidly covered dozens of destinations. And, in addition to impecunious backpackers, Rough Guides soon acquired a much broader and older readership that relished the guides' wit and inquisitiveness as much as their enthusiastic, critical approach and value-for-money ethos.

These days, Rough Guides include recommendations from shoestring to luxury and cover more than 200 destinations around the globe, including almost every country in the Americas and Europe, more than half of Africa and most of Asia and Australasia. Our ever-growing team of authors and photographers is spread all over the world, particularly in Europe, the USA and Australia.

In the early 1990s, Rough Guides branched out of travel, with the publication of Rough Guides to World Music, Classical Music and the Internet. All three have become benchmark titles in their fields, spearheading the publication of a wide range of books under the Rough Guide name.

Including the travel series, Rough Guides now number more than 350 titles, covering: phrasebooks, waterproof maps, music guides from Opera to Heavy Metal, reference works as diverse as Conspiracy Theories and Shakespeare, and popular culture books from iPods to Poker. Rough Guides also produce a series of more than 120 World Music CDs in partnership with World Music Network.

Visit www.roughguides.com to see our latest publications.

Rough Guide travel images are available for commercial licensing at www.roughguidespictures.com

## Rough Guide credits

**Text editor**: Keith Drew and James Smart
**Layout**: Jessica Subramanian
**Cartography**: Miles Irwin
**Picture editor**: Nicole Newman
**Production**: Rebecca Short
**Proofreader**: Karen Parker
**Cover design**: Chloë Roberts
**Photographer**: Roger d'Olivere Mapp
**Editorial**: Ruth Blackmore, Andy Turner, Edward Aves, Alice Park, Lucy White, Jo Kirby, Natasha Foges, Róisín Cameron, Emma Traynor, Emma Gibbs, Kathryn Lane, Christina Valhouli, Monica Woods, Mani Ramaswamy, Harry Wilson, Lucy Cowie, Helen Ochyra, Alison Roberts, Joe Staines, Peter Buckley, Matthew Milton, Tracy Hopkins, Ruth Tidball; **Delhi** Madhavi Singh, Karen D'Souza, Lubna Shaheen
**Design & Pictures**: **London** Scott Stickland, Dan May, Diana Jarvis, Mark Thomas, Chloë Roberts, Sarah Cummins, Emily Taylor; **Delhi** Umesh Aggarwal, Ajay Verma, Ankur Guha, Pradeep Thapliyal, Sachin Tanwar, Anita Singh, Nikhil Agarwal
**Production**: Vicky Baldwin

**Cartography**: **London** Maxine Repath, Ed Wright, Katie Lloyd-Jones; **Delhi** Rajesh Chhibber, Ashutosh Bharti, Rajesh Mishra, Animesh Pathak, Jasbir Sandhu, Karobi Gogoi, Alakananda Bhattacharya, Swati Handoo, Deshpal Dabas
**Online**: London George Atwell, Faye Hellon, Jeanette Angell, Fergus Day, Justine Bright, Clare Bryson, Aine Fearon, Adrian Low, Ezgi Celebi, Amber Bloomfield; Delhi Amit Verma, Rahul Kumar, Narender Kumar, Ravi Yadav, Debojit Borah, Rakesh Kumar, Ganesh Sharma, Shisir Basumatari
**Marketing & Publicity**: **London** Liz Statham, Niki Hanmer, Louise Maher, Jess Carter, Vanessa Godden, Vivienne Watton, Anna Paynton, Rachel Sprackett, Libby Jellie, Laura Vipond, Vanessa McDonald; **New York** Katy Ball, Judi Powers, Nancy Lambert; **Delhi** Ragini Govind
**Manager India**: Punita Singh
**Reference Director**: Andrew Lockett
**Operations Manager**: Helen Phillips
**PA to Publishing Director**: Nicola Henderson
**Publishing Director**: Martin Dunford
**Commercial Manager**: Gino Magnotta
**Managing Director**: John Duhigg

## Publishing information

This first edition published July 2009 by
**Rough Guides Ltd**,
80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL
14 Local Shopping Centre, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi 110017, India
**Distributed by the Penguin Group**
Penguin Books Ltd,
80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL
Penguin Group (USA)
375 Hudson Street, NY 10014, USA
Penguin Group (Australia)
250 Camberwell Road, Camberwell, Victoria 3124, Australia
Penguin Group (Canada)
195 Harry Walker Parkway N, Newmarket, ON, L3Y 7B3 Canada
Penguin Group (NZ)
67 Apollo Drive, Mairangi Bay, Auckland 1310, New Zealand
Cover concept by Peter Dyer.

Typeset in Bembo and Helvetica to an original design by Henry Iles.
Printed and bound in China
© Terry Richardson 2009
No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without permission from the publisher except for the quotation of brief passages in reviews.
376pp includes index
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library
ISBN: 978-1-84836-068-6
The publishers and authors have done their best to ensure the accuracy and currency of all the information in **The Rough Guide to Istanbul**, however, they can accept no responsibility for any loss, injury, or inconvenience sustained by any traveller as a result of information or advice contained in the guide.
1 3 5 7 9 8 6 4 2

## Help us update

We've gone to a lot of effort to ensure that the first edition of **The Rough Guide to Istanbul** is accurate and up to date. However, things change – places get "discovered", opening hours are notoriously fickle, restaurants and rooms raise prices or lower standards. If you feel we've got it wrong or left something out, we'd like to know, and if you can remember the address, the price, the hours, the phone number, so much the better.

Please send your comments with the subject line "**Rough Guide Istanbul Update**" to Ⓔmail@roughguides.com. We'll credit all contributions and send a copy of the next edition (or any other Rough Guide if you prefer) for the very best emails.

Have your questions answered and tell others about your trip at Ⓦcommunity.roughguides.com or www.roughguides.atinfopop.com.

## Acknowledgements

Many thanks to: Hakan, for inside knowledge of the city; Erkan of Talisman Tour, for hospitality and pointing me in the right direction; Seyhun, for some last-gasp facts; and Atıl Cuce of Middle Earth Travel, for a sybarite's tips to Beyoğlu. Many thanks also to Nalan Kazazoğlu at the press office in Antalya, for helping me obtain an invaluable press pass; Dr Andrew Maczek, for cheerfully but meticulously sharpening up the history section; and to Prof. Trevor Watkins, for checking the same section and pointing me towards some sources for recently unearthed archeological evidence. And to Keith Drew, for his calm, patient and very efficient editing. Last but not least to the lovely Lem, for tramping with me through the dodgiest backstreets of İstanbul to find the obscurest of Armenian churches, joining me in one too many beers in assorted Beyoğlu bars, and for keeping me sane through the whole research/writing process.

## Photo credits

All photos © Rough Guides except the following:

### Things not to miss

**10** Büyükada © UpperhallLtd/photolibrary
**15** Trojan horse © photolibrary
**19** Cağaloğu Hamamı ©Yoray Liberman/Getty
**21** Interior of the Selimiye Camii © Adam Woolfitt/photolibrary

### Ottoman art and architecture colour section

Süleymaniye Camii © Richard T. Nowitz/Corbis
Topkapı Palace and the Bosphorus © Michele Falzone/photolibrary
Dolmabahçe Palace © San Rostro/photolibrary
Selimiye Camii © Tibor Bognar/Alamy

### Eating out colour section

Chicken kebab in Istanbul © dbimages/Alamy

### Black and whites

**p.254** Büyükada © Rawdon Wyatt/Alamy
**p.264** Iznik city walls © Ruggero Vanni/Corbis
**p.274** Green Tomb of Mehmet I © Adam Woolfitt/photolibrary
**p.294** World War I memorial, Gallipoli Peninsula © Demetrio Carrasco/photolibrary
**p.303** Wrestlers, Kirkpinar Oil-wrestling Festival © Jeffrey L. Rotman/Corbis



*Selected images from our guidebooks are available for licensing from:*
ROUGHGUIDESPICTURES.COM

# Index

Map entries are in colour.


## A

**accommodation** ...175–185
A'jia ... 185
Alp Hotel ... 177
Anemon Galata ... 181
Apricot Hotel ... 177
Arena Hotel ... 176
Armada Hotel ... 178
Avrupa Hotel ... 183
Ayasofya Konakları ... 177
Bauhaus Hostel ... 178
Bentley Hotel ... 183
Berk Guesthouse ... 178
Big Apple ... 178
Büyük Londra Oteli ... 181
Central Palace Hotel ... 184
Cihangir Hotel ... 183
Çırağan Palace Kempinski Hotel ... 184
Divan Taksim Suites ... 184
Ekletik Guest House ... 182
Empress Zoe ... 178
Eysan Hotel ... 184
Four Seasons Hotel ... 178
Galata Residence ... 182
Hanedan Hotel ... 178
Hotel Alzer ... 176
Hotel Antique ... 176
Hotel Ayasofya ... 176
Hotel Daphnis ... 181
Hotel Devman ... 182
Hotel Poem ... 178
Hotel Silviya ... 182
Hotel Uyan ... 179
Hüriyet Hotel ... 179
İbrahim Pasha Hotel ... 176
İstanbul Suite Home ... 176
İstanbul Hostel ... 178
Kariye Hotel ... 181
Kybele Hotel ... 177
Lush Hip Hotel ... 182
Marmara Hotel ... 184
Marmara Pera Hotel ... 182
Midtown Hotel ... 184
Monopol Hotel ... 182
Nomade Hotel ... 177
Orient Youth Hostel ... 179
Pera Palas ... 182
Richmond Hotel ... 182
Sarniç Hotel ... 176
Saydam Hotel ... 183
Senator Hotel ... 180
Side Hotel & Pension ... 179
Sirkeci Konak ... 180
Sofa Hotel ... 184
Soğut Hotel ... 180
Suite Home İstiklal ... 183
Sultan Hostel ... 179
Tria Hotel ... 179
Turkoman Hotel ... 176
Vardar Palace Hotel ... 183
Villa Zurich ... 183
World House Hostel ... 183
Yeni Saray Oteli ... 185
Yeşil Ev ... 177
Yıdız Hotel ... 180
**activities** ... 237–242
addresses ... 37
agents, travel ... 21, 22
Ağva ... 172
airlines ... 22
airports ... 27
*akbil* ... 29
Aksaray ... 98
alcohol ... 206
Anadolu Kavağı ... 169
antique funicular see Tünel
antique tram ... 32
antiques ... 227
antiquities ... 25, 26, 227
ANZAC Day ... 291
apartments ... 175
Aqueduct of Valens ... 96
Ara Güler ... 132, 192, 203, 218
Arnavutköy ... 162
Arasta Çarşısı ... 77
Archeology Museum ... 16, 68, 243
arenas ... 212
Armenians ... 100, 107, 116, 137, 326, 332, 342
arrival ... 27
art galleries ... 217
**Asian İstanbul** ... 152–159
Asian Shore, the ... 167
At Meydanı ... 71
ATMs ... 36
Avşa ... 257
Aya Eufemia ... 154
Aya Irene ... 58
Aya Konstantino ... 116
**Aya Sofya** ... 10, 53–57
Aya Sofya ... 56

## B

*baklava* ... 188, see also *Eating out* colour section
Balat ... 111
ballet ... 215
banks ... 36
bars ... 205–208
360 ... 205
45'Lik ... 205
5.Kat ... 205
Ajda ... 223
Atlantik Pub ... 206
Badehane ... 206
Bar Bahçe ... 223
Bodrum Bar ... 205
Büyük Londra Oteli ... 207
Buz ... 207
Café Symra ... 207
Cheers ... 205
Cozy Pub ... 205
Enginar ... 207
Etap ... 207
Isis ... 208
James Joyce Irish Pub ... 207
Kaktüs ... 207
Karga ... 208
KV ... 207
Leb-i-Derya ... 207
Mikla ... 207
Nu Teras ... 207
Orient Youth Hostel Bar ... 205
Panos Şaraphanesi ... 208
Pasific ... 208
Ritim Bar ... 208
Sugar Café ... 224
Sultan Pub ... 205
basketball ... 237
battlefields, World War I ... 284
beaches ... 170
Bebek ... 164
beer ... 206
Belgrade Forest ... 167
**Beşiktaş** ... 145–149
Beşiktaş and Ortaköy ... 146
Beşiktaş, football club ... 238
Beyazit Camii ... 97
Beyazit Meydanı ... 97
Beylerbeyi Palace ... 168
**Beyoğlu** ... 123–133
Beyoğlu, Taksim and the waterfront districts ... 124–125
Binbirdirek Sarnıçı ... 78
Black Sea resorts ... 170
Black Sea resorts, The Bosphorus and ... 161
Blue Mosque ... 13, 72, see also *Ottoman art and architecture* colour section
**books** ... 228, 340–347
border inspections ... 25

Bosphorus, the ..... 1, 6, 9, 160
**Bosphorus, The ..... 163**
**Bosphorus and Black Sea resorts, The ..... 161**
Bosphorus Bridge ..... 150, 312
Bosphorus Cruise .... 12, 29, 33, 160, 246
*boza* ..... 97, 191
bric-a-brac ..... 227
British Crimean War Cemetery ..... 155
Bülent Ersoy ..... 222
Burgazada ..... 251
**Bursa** ..... 267–280
Bursa ..... 270–271
accommodation ..... 269
arrival ..... 268
banks ..... 280
bars ..... 279
books ..... 280
buses ..... 280
cafés ..... 279
car rental ..... 280
consulate ..... 280
drinking ..... 279
eating ..... 279
entertainment ..... 279
ferries ..... 280
*hamam* ..... 280
Heykel ..... 272
Hisar, the ..... 275
history ..... 268
hospital ..... 280
internet ..... 280
left luggage ..... 280
Muradiye ..... 276
police ..... 280
post office ..... 280
transport, city ..... 268
Uluumay Ottoman Costumes and Jewellery Museum ..... 277
Yeşil ..... 273
Yıldırım Beyazit Camii ..... 275
**buses** ..... 29–31
Büyük Bend reservoir ... 167
Büyük Mecidiye Camii ..... 1, 150
Büyükada ..... 253

# C

cabaret ..... 214
cable car ..... 31
**cafés** ..... 186–195
Ağa Kapısı ..... 190
Ali Baba Köftecisi ..... 194
Altın Kupa ..... 187
Arnavut Köfteci ..... 191
Aşşk ..... 194
Banyan ..... 193
Baylan ..... 194
Bedestan Café ..... 190
Buhara 93 ..... 187
Canum Ciğerim ..... 192
Çiğdem Patisserie ..... 187
Divan Pastanesi ..... 194
Doy Doy ..... 187
Erenler Çay Bahçesi ..... 191
Fasuli ..... 193
Fes Café ..... 191
Galata House Café ..... 193
Galata Konak Patisserie ... 193
Güney ..... 193
House Café ..... 194
İstanbul Modern Café ..... 193
Kafe Ara ..... 192
Kallavi Nargile Café ..... 192
Karadeniz Pide Salonu ..... 187
Karaköy Gülloğlü ..... 193
Kardelen Pub ..... 190
Konyali ..... 190
Konyali Café ..... 187
Lavanta ..... 194
Leb-i-Derya ..... 192
Lucca ..... 194
Markiz ..... 192
Nizam Pide ..... 192
Pia ..... 192
The Pudding Shop (Lale Restaurant) ..... 190
Şark Kahvesi ..... 191
Saray ..... 192
Simit Saray ..... 193
Sofa ..... 190
Subaşı Lokantasi ..... 191
Sultan Café ..... 191
Sultan Pub ..... 190
Sütiş ..... 194
Tarihi Kuru Fasuliye Süleymaniye Erzincalı Ali Baba ..... 191
Tarihi Sultahmet Köftecisi ..... 190
Van Kavaltı Sofrası ..... 191
Vefa Bozacısı ..... 191
Cağaloğu Hamamı ..... 78
Cage, the ..... 62, 66, 73
**Çanakkale** ..... 283–288
**Çanakkale ..... 285**
car rental agencies ..... 34
carpets ..... 228
see also *Ottoman art and architecture* colour section
Çarşamba ..... 104
Çarşamba Pazarı ..... 105
Çengelköy ..... 168
censorship ..... 39
children, Istanbul ... 243–248
Christianity .... 314, 317, 319
Çıbali Gate ..... 109
cinema .... 41, 133, 219, 338
Çinili Hamamı ..... 103
Çırağan Palace ..... 148
**clubs** ..... 205–212
Babylon ..... 209
Balans ..... 209
Barşık Club ..... 223
Bigudi ..... 223
Club 14 ..... 223
Crystal ..... 211
Dogzstar ..... 209
Gizli Bahçe ..... 209
Gossip ..... 210
Hayal Kahvesi ..... 210
Indigo ..... 210
Jazz Café ..... 210
Jazz Stop ..... 210
Kemanic ..... 210
Liferoof/Wongo ..... 210
Line ..... 210
Love Dance Point ..... 223
Mojo ..... 210
Nardis Jazz Club ..... 210
Nayah ..... 210
Otherside ..... 223
Peyote ..... 211
Pixie ..... 211
Prive ..... 223
Q Jazz at Les Ottomans .. 211
Reina ..... 211
Riddim ..... 211
Roxy ..... 211
Sahra Bar ..... 224
Shaft ..... 211
Sortie ..... 211
Supper Club ..... 211
Tek Yön ..... 224
clubs, sports ..... 240
cocoon auction ..... 272
Column of Constantine ... 93
Constantine, Emperor ... 57, 70, 261, 313, 314
Constantinople ..... 71, 314–320, 328
consulates ..... 24
costs ..... 35
Council of Nicaea ..... 260, 261, 314, 316
crime ..... 45
Crusades, the ..... 316
cuisine ..... 188
currency ..... 35
customs ..... 25
cycling ..... 240

# D

dance ..... 215
Darphane, the ..... 68
dentists ..... 47
dialling codes ..... 38
discography ..... 335
Divan Literature Museum ..... 138
Divan Yolu ..... 78

Divan, the ..... 62
doctors ..... 47
Dolmabahçe Palace ..... 14, 147, see also *Ottoman art and architecture* colour section
*dolmuşes* ..... 31
drinking ..... 204–214
driving in İstanbul ..... 33
duty-free ..... 25

# E

**eating** ..... 16, 186–203, see also Eating out colour section
Eceabat ..... 295
**Edirne** ..... 298–307
Edirne ..... 301
accommodation ..... 299
arrival ..... 299
banks ..... 307
Bedestan ..... 300
buses ..... 307
drinking ..... 306
eating ..... 306
Edirne Museum ..... 304
Eski Camii ..... 300
Great Synagogue, the ..... 305
history ..... 298
hospital ..... 307
internet ..... 307
Kale İçi ..... 300
Kule Kapısı ..... 300
Muradiye Camii ..... 304
Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts ..... 304
police ..... 307
post office ..... 307
Selimiye Camii ..... 302
Semiz Ali Paşa Çarşısı ..... 300
shopping ..... 306
Sokullu Paşa Hamamı ..... 302
Tunca River ..... 305
Üç Şerefeli Camii ..... 302
Ekinlink and Paşalimanı ..... 258
email ..... 38
embassies, Turkish ..... 24
emergencies ..... 38
Eminönü ..... 83
Eminönü, Sirkeci, Tahtakale and ..... 81
Emirgan ..... 165
Emirgan Parkı ..... 165, 245
Ergenekon trial ..... 140, 332
Eski İmaret Camii ..... 104
etiquette, in mosques ..... 42
European Shore, the ..... 162
events, cultural ..... 43
Eye of the Sultan ..... 58, 62
Eyüp ..... 120
Eyüp Camii ..... 120

# F

faith ..... 107
Fatih ..... 104
Fatih Camii ..... 104
Fenerbahçe, football club ..... 154, 238
ferries ..... 28, 32
festivals ..... 43
Fethiye Camii ..... 106
film ..... 219, 338
flights ..... 19
from Australia, New Zealand and South Africa ..... 20
from North America ..... 20
from the UK and Ireland ..... 19
Florence Nightingale ... 157, 168, 324
Florence Nightingale Museum ..... 156, 157
food ..... 186, 188, 230
food shops ..... 230
**football** ..... 14, 238–240
Formula 1 ..... 242
Fossati brothers ..... 55, 57, 96, 138
funiculars ..... 31

# G

Galata ..... 136
Galata Bridge ..... 83
Galata Mevlevihanesi ... 138
Galata Tower ..... 11, 138
Galatasaray, football club ..... 132, 238
galleries, art ..... 217
**Gallipoli** ..... 290–297
Gallipoli and Troy ..... 292
gay İstanbul ..... 222
Gedikpaşa ..... 99
Gelibolu ..... 296
Gelibolu and Troy ..... 292
**glossaries** ..... 360–363
acronyms and abbreviations ..... 363
architectural ..... 361–362
Turkish terms ..... 360–361
Golden Horn, the ..... 84
**Grand Bazaar** ..... 8, 12, 88–92, 225
Grand Bazaar ..... 92
Grand Bazaar and around ..... 90–91
Grand Prix ..... 242
Great Palace ..... 77
Greek Orthodox Patriarchate ..... 109
Gülhane Parkı ..... 67
gyms ..... 240

# H

Hafif metro ..... 27, 31
Hamam of Roxelana ..... 74
*hamams* ..... 16, 241
Harem, the ..... 65, 67
Haydarpaşa ..... 155
Haydarpaşa and Kadikoy ..... 153
Haydarpaşa station ... 8, 155
health ..... 46
Heybeliada ..... 252
Hıdıv Kısır ..... 245
Hippodrome, the ..... 14, 71
Hippy Trail ..... 79
**history** ..... 311–333
History of Science and Technology in Islam Museum ..... 82
holidays, public ..... 41
hospitals ..... 47
hostels ..... 175
**hotels** ..... 175–185

# I

iconoclasm ..... 316
Imperial Treasury, the ..... 62
İmrarhor Camii ..... 115
insurance ..... 47
International Film Festival ..... 44, 219
İnternational İstanbul Biennial ..... 45, 219
International Music Festival ..... 44, 215
International Theatre Festival ..... 44, 217
internet ..... 38
InterRail passes ..... 21
İstanbul Modern .... 11, 141, 215, 218, 244
İstanbul University ..... 97
İstiklal Caddesi ..... 126
İstiklal Caddesi .... 128–129
**İznik** ..... 259–265
İznik ..... 260

# J

janissaries.....62, 320, 322
jewellery.....226
Jews.....101, 107, 111, 140, 168
Jewish Museum.....140

# K

Kadıköy.....152
Kanlı Kilisesi.....110
Kanlıca.....169
Kapılı Çarşı…see Grand Bazaar
Karaköy.....139
Kariye Museum.....11, 107
KDV.....36
kebabs 187, see also *Eating out* colour section
**kids' İstanbul**.....243–248
kilims.....228
Kılyos.....170
Kınalıada.....251
Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling Festival.....303
Küçü Ayasofya Camii.....76
Kumkapı.....99
Kuruçeşme.....162
Kuzguncuk.....168

# L

Laleli.....98
Lalei Camii.....98
land walls, the.....113
land walls, the.....114
**language**.....349–363
laundry.....48
leather.....234
left luggage.....48
lesbian İstanbul.....222
light railway.....27, 31
literature.....340
live music venues.....208
Long Aqueduct.....167
lost property.....48

# M

magazines.....39
mail.....37
malls, shopping.....225
maps.....25, 26
Maritime Museum.....148
**Marmara Islands, the**.....255–258
Marmara.....256
Marmaray Project....31, 69, 82, 152
media, the.....39
Mehmet II.....105, 318
Mehmet the Conqueror.....58, 62, 72, 98, 118, 119, 120, 147
Mehter Band.....135
Mesipaşa Camii.....99
metro.....31
metrobus.....30
*meyhanes* 16, 195, see also *Eating out* colour section
*Midnight Express*.....79
Military Museum...135, 243
Mimar Sinan.....55, 72, 74, 75, 94, 95, 96, 103, 140, 159, 298, 300
Miniatürk.....143, 244
Mısır Çarşısı.....85
money.....35
Mosaic Museum.....77
mosques, etiquette.....42
museums
Archeology Museum...68, 243
Divan Literature Museum.....138
Florence Nightingale Museum.....156, 157
History of Science and Technology in Islam Museum.....82
İstanbul Modern.....141, 215, 218, 244
Jewish Museum.....140
Kariye Museum.....107
Maritime Museum.....148
Military Museum.....135, 243
Mosaic Museum.....77
Museum of the Ancient Orient.....68
Museum of Calligraphy.....97
Museum of Caricatures and Humour.....103
Museum of Carpets.....73
Museum of Energy.....143
Museum of Fine Arts.....147
Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art.....73
Museum of Turkish Ceramics.....70
Ottoman Bank Museum...136, 218
Pera Museum.....131, 218
Press Museum.....93
Rahmi M. Koç Industrial Museum.....142, 243
Sadberk Hanım Museum.....166
Sakip Sabancı Museum...165, 218, 244
Storage Museum.....147
Toy Museum.....154, 244
Uluumay Ottoman Costumes and Jewellery Museum.....277
Victory Museum.....143
Yedikule Museum.....116
Yıdız Palace Museum.....149
**music**.....334–337
music, classical....215, 235
music, traditional Turkish.....212, 235, 334
Mustafa.....333

# N

*nargiles*.....141
newspapers.....39
Nicaean Creed.....261
**nightlife**.....14, 204–214
Nika riots....55, 58, 71, 315
**Northwest quarter**.....101–112
Northwest quarter.....102

# O

odalisques.....67
oil wrestling.....237, 303
opening hours.....41
opera.....215
Orhan Pamuk.....132,137, 331, 343, 346
Ortakapı.....59
Ortaköy.....150
Ortaköy, Beşiktaş and.....146
Ottoman Bank Museum.....136, 218
Ottoman Empire, the....319

# P

package holidays.....21
Palace of Bucoleon.....77
patisseries.....186
Pera Museum.....131, 218
*Pera Palas Hotel*...130, 182
performing arts.....217
Petrus Gyllius.....70

pharmacies....47
phonecards....38
phones....37
pickpocketing....45
poetry....347
police....46
Polonezköy....169
post offices....37
Press Museum....93
**Princes' Islands, the**....13, 249–255
Princes' Islands, the....250
PTT Merkez....83
public holidays....41
Pudding Shop, The....79, 190

# R

rabies....47
Radar Live Festival....170, 209
radio....41
Rahmi M. Koç Industrial Museum....142, 243
rail contacts....23
*rakı*....206
religion....107
resorts, Black Sea....170
restaurants....195–203
360....199
Ahırkapı Balıcısı....196
Amedros....196
Asithane....198
Ayder Balik....203
Balıkçı Sabahattin....196
Burna Hacibey Kebacısı....201
Çezayir....199
Çhanga....199
Çiya Sofrası & Kebapçi....202
Çokçok....199
Cumhuriyet Meyhanesi....199
Darüzzafiye....197
Degustasyon....199
Dubb....196
Fesleğen....200
Ficcin....200
Hacı Abdullah....200
Hamdi Et Lokantası....196
Hanedan....202
Hatay Sofrası....197
Havuzlu....197
Hünkar....201
Huzur (Arabin Yeri)....202
İmbat....197
İmroz....200
Kaburga Sofrası....198
Kalamar....198
Kanaat Lokantası....202
Kathisma Restaurant....196
Kıyı....203
Kör Agop....198
Kordon....203
Körfez....203
Leb-i-Deyra Richmond....200
Levi Et Lokantası....197
Lokanta & Nu Teras....200
Mikla....200
Mosaik Restaurant....196
Musafir....201
Müzedechanga....203
Nature and Peace....201
Olimiyat 2....198
Ottoman Antakya Antep Murfağaği....198
Padaliza....198
Pandeli's....197
Parkfora....203
Parsifal....201
Paşazade....197
Rami Restaurant....196
Refik....201
Rejans....201
Tuğra....202
Vira Vira....203
Vogue....202
Yanyalı Fehmi Lokantası....202
Yedigün....203
Zencefil....201
Zeugma....201
Zeyrekhane....199
riots....71, 98, 132, 135
Roxelana....67, 74, 87, 96, 321
Rumeli Kavağı....167
running....240
Rüstem Paşa Camii....87

# S

Sadberk Hanım Museum....166
Sakip Sabancı Museum....165, 218, 244
Samatya Kilisesi....116
Santralıstanbul....143
Sariyer....166
sea buses....33
sea walls....76
Selimiye Camii....16, 302, see also *Ottoman art and architecture* colour section
sexual harassment....49
**shopping**....225–236
shopping malls....225
Şile....171
silk, Bursa....272
Sirkeci....80
Sirkeci, Eminönü and Tahtakale....81
Sirkeci station....8, 82
smoking....48
Sokollu Mehmet Paşa Camii....75
Spice Bazaar....85, 225, 230
spices....230
Spoonmaker's Diamond....64
**sports**....237–242
St Stephen of the Bulgars....5, 110
Storage Museum....147
Süleyman the Magnificent....63, 74, 95, 117, 167, 278, 341
Süleymaniye Camii....13, 95
Süleymaniye Külleysi....94, see also *Ottoman art and architecture* colour section
Sultan Abdülmecid....148, 323
Sultan Ahmet....62, 73, 322
Sultan Mahmut....66, 93, 136
**Sultanahmet**....53–79
Sultanahmet....54
Sultanahmet Camii see Blue Mosque
Sulukule....118
supermarkets....231
Surp Hreşdagabet....112
Surp Hovannes....116
Surp Levon....154
Surp Takavor....154
swimming pools....240

# T

Tahtakale....86
Tahtakale, Sirkeci, Eminönü and....81
Taksim Square....133, 135
Taksim Square and around....134
Tarabaya....166
taxis....32
telephones....37
television....40
Termal....265
theatres....217
Theodosius II....113, 314
tickets....26, 204
time....48
tipping....35
toilets....48

Tomb of Sultan Ahmet....73
Tomb of Sultan Mahmut II ....93
Tophane....140
Topkapı....118
Topkapı Dagger....63
**Topkapı Palace**....14, 57–67, see also *Ottoman art and architecture* colour section
Topkapı Palace....60–61
tour operators....23
tours....34
Toy Museum....154, 244
traditional Turkish music ....208, 334
train information....23
train stations....27
trains....30
trams....30, 32
transport, city....29
travel agents....21, 22, 34
travel passes....29
travellers, with disabilities ....49
traveller's cheques....35
Treaty of Kadesh....69
**Troy**....14, 288–290
Tünel....27, 31, 32, 127
Turkish Delight....189, 230

# U

Uludağ....281
Uluumay Ottoman Costumes and Jewellery Museum....277
Üsküdar....157
Üsküdar....158

# V

valide Sultan....65, 66, 67
VAT....36
vegetarian food....195
Victory Museum....143
visas....24

# W

water taxis....32, 33
websites on Turkey....25
Wednesday Market....105
wine....206
women travellers....49
working in İstanbul....49
World War I battlefields ....284

# Y

yalı....164
Yavuz Selim Camii....105
Yedikule....115
Yedikule Museum....116
Yeni Camii....84
Yeniköy....166
Yerebatan Sarniçi....2, 12, 70
Yıdız Palace....149
Yıdız Palace Museum....149
Yıdız Parkı....149, 245

# Map symbols

maps are listed in the full index using coloured text

- Chapter boundary
- International boundary
- Motorway
- Road
- Path
- River
- Ferry route
- Railway
- Light railway/Hafif Metro
- Tram
- Arial tramway
- Funicular
- Ferry route
- Ferry terminal (regional maps)
- Bus/Dolmus stop
- Wall
- Hill
- Point of interest
- Tourist office
- Fountain
- Lighthouse
- Hospital
- Post office
- Internet access
- Castle
- Ruins
- Museum
- Statue
- Monument
- Mosque
- Synagogue
- Church (regional maps)
- Church (town maps)
- Building
- Cemetery
- Jewish cemetery
- Park/forest
- Beach

We're covered. Are you?

# ROUGH GUIDES Travel Insurance

Visit our website at www.roughguides.com/website/shop or call:

COLUMBUS™ Travel Insurance

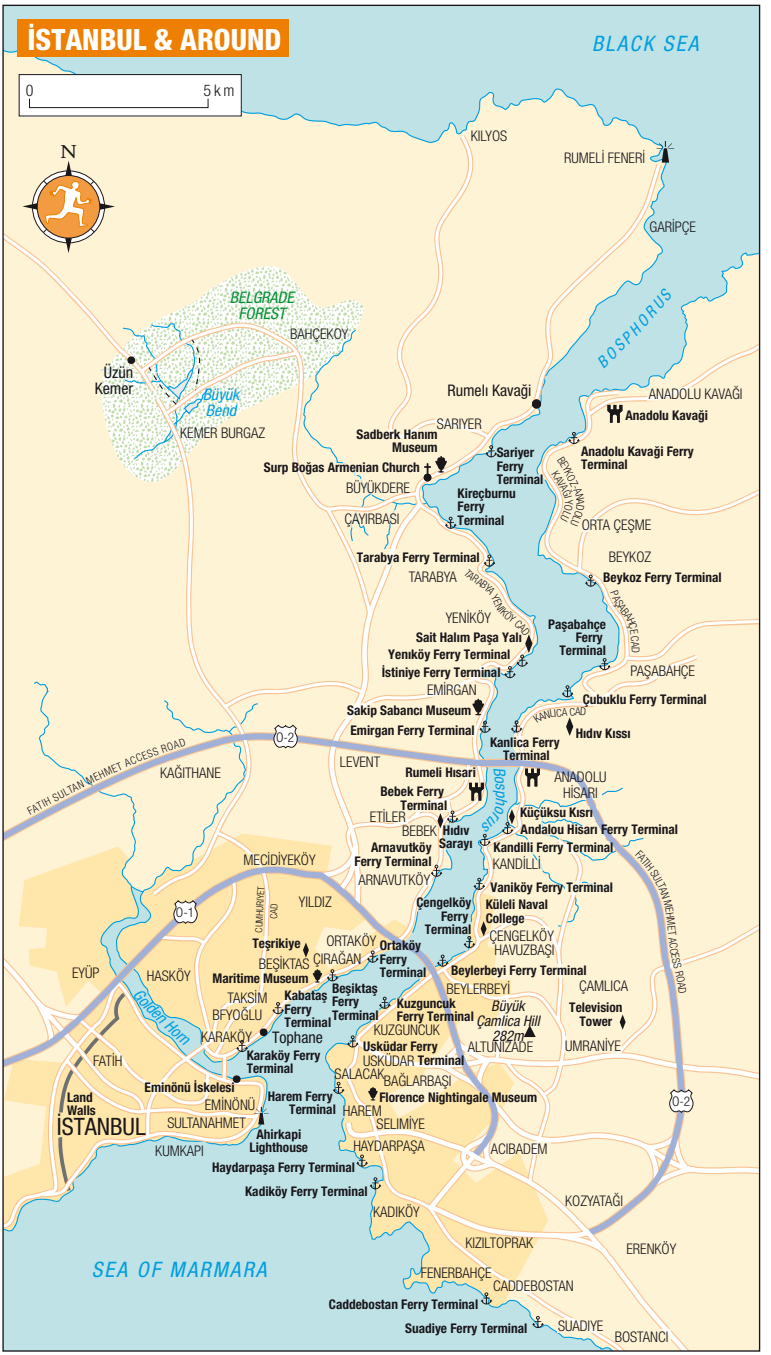
ROUGH GUIDES

- UK: 0800 083 9507
- Spain: 900 997 149
- Australia: 1300 669 999
- New Zealand: 0800 55 99 11
- Worldwide: +44 870 890 2843
- USA, call toll free on: 1 800 749 4922

Please quote our ref: ***Rough Guides books***

Cover for over 46 different nationalities and available in 4 different languages.

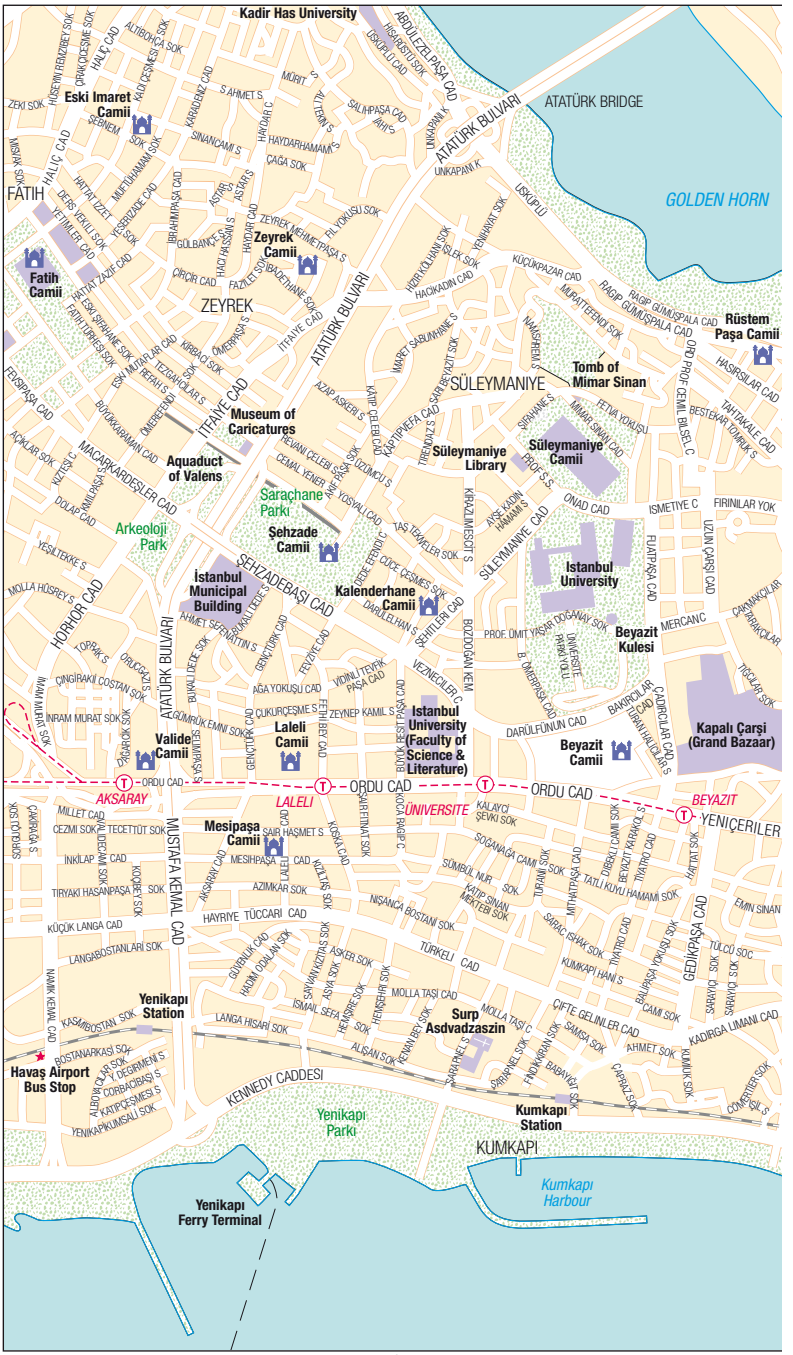
İSTANBUL & AROUND THE SEA OF MARMARA
0
50km
BULGARIA
GREECE
BLACK SEA
SEA OF MARMARA
THRACE
Kapıkule
Edirne
Kirklareli
Pazarkule
Kastaniés
Havsa
Kıyıköy
Vize
E 80
Babaeski
Saray
Lüleburgaz
E80
Pithio
Ergene Çayı
Çerkezköy
Uzunköprü
Menç Çayı
E 87
Çorlu
İSTANBUL
Şile
Kipi
İpsala
E 25/110
Tekirdağ
Kumbağ
Kartal
Keşan
Princes' Islands
E 80
Gebze
Hereke
Adapazari (Sakarya)
Gaziköy
Hasköy
Darica
Şarköy
Marmara Islands
Çınarcık
İzmit
E80
Topcular
Karamürsel
Yalova
Saros Gulf
Termal
Bolayir
Kapıdağı Peninsula
Armutlu
Orhangazi
Avşa
Pamalimanı
Erdek
İznik Gölü
İznik
Gelibolu (Gallipoli) Peninsula
Gelibolu
Mudanya
Gemlik
Lapseki
E 90
Denizkent
Bandırma
Zeytinbağı
Kumyaka
Biga
E90
Gölyazi
Eceabat
Çanakkale
Gönen
Manyas Gölü
Uluabat Gölü
Bursa
Bilecik
The Dardanelles
Biga Çayı
Gönen Çayı
Uludağ (2543m)
İnegöl
Tevfikiye
Güzelyali
Troy
N


İSTANBUL & AROUND
BLACK SEA
0
5 km
N
KILYOS
RUMELİ FENERİ
GARİPÇE
BELGRADE FOREST
BAHÇEKÖY
Üzün Kemer
Büyük Bend
KEMER BURGAZ
BOSPHORUS
Rumelı Kavağı
ANADOLU KAVAĞI
Anadolu Kavağı
SARIYER
Sadberk Hanım Museum
Surp Boğas Armenian Church
Sariyer Ferry Terminal
Anadolu Kavağı Ferry Terminal
BÜYÜKDERE
Kireçburnu Ferry Terminal
ÇAYIRBAŞI
ORTA ÇEŞME
Tarabya Ferry Terminal
TARABYA
BEYKOZ
Beykoz Ferry Terminal
YENİKÖY
Sait Halım Paşa Yalı
Yenıköy Ferry Terminal
İstiniye Ferry Terminal
Paşabahçe Ferry Terminal
PAŞABAHÇE
EMİRGAN
Çubuklu Ferry Terminal
Sakip Sabancı Museum
Emirgan Ferry Terminal
Hıdıv Kısrı
Kanlica Ferry Terminal
FATİH SULTAN MEHMET ACCESS ROAD
KAĞITHANE
LEVENT
Rumeli Hısarı
ANADOLU HİSARI
Bebek Ferry Terminal
Küçüksu Kısrı
ETİLER
BEBEK
Hıdıv Sarayı
Andalou Hisarı Ferry Terminal
Arnavutköy Ferry Terminal
Kandilli Ferry Terminal
MECİDİYEKÖY
KANDİLLİ
ARNAVUTKÖY
Vaniköy Ferry Terminal
YILDIZ
Çengelköy Ferry Terminal
Küleli Naval College
Teşrikiye
ORTAKÖY
Ortaköy Ferry Terminal
ÇENGELKÖY
BEŞİKTAS
ÇIRAĞAN
HAVUZBAŞI
EYÜP
HASKÖY
Maritime Museum
Beylerbeyi Ferry Terminal
BEYLERBEYİ
ÇAMLICA
TAKSİM
Kabatas Ferry Terminal
Beşiktaş Ferry Terminal
Kuzguncuk Ferry Terminal
Büyük Çamlica Hill 282m
Television Tower
BFYOĞLU
KUZGUNCUK
KARAKÖY
Tophane
Üsküdar Ferry Terminal
ALTUNİZADE
UMRANİYE
Karaköy Ferry Terminal
ÜSKÜDAR Terminal
FATİH
SALACAK
BAĞLARBAŞI
Eminönü İskelesi
Florence Nightingale Museum
Land Walls
İSTANBUL
EMİNÖNÜ
Harem Ferry Terminal
HAREM
SELİMİYE
SULTANAHMET
Ahirkapi Lighthouse
KUMKAPI
HAYDARPAŞA
ACIBADEM
Haydarpaşa Ferry Terminal
Kadiköy Ferry Terminal
KOZYATAĞI
KADIKÖY
KIZILTOPRAK
ERENKÖY
SEA OF MARMARA
FENERBAHÇE
CADDEBOSTAN
Caddebostan Ferry Terminal
Suadiye Ferry Terminal
SUADIYE
BOSTANCI
Golden Horn
0-1
0-2
0-2
CUMHURIYET CAD
KANLICA CAD
PAŞABAHÇE CAD
TARABYA YENIKÖY CAD
BEYKOZ-ANADOLU KAVAĞI YOLU
FATİH SULTAN MEHMET ACCESS ROAD

PUBLIC TRANSPORT
M1 Aksaray - Havalimani Metro
M2 Taksim - 4 Levent Metro
T1 Zeytinburnu - Kabataş Tramway
T2 Zeytinburnu - Bağcılar Tramway
T3 Kadiköy - Moda Tramway
T4 Edirnekapı - Sultançiftliği Tramway
Taksim - Tünel
B1 Sirkeci - Halkalı Suburban Railway
B2 Haydarpaşa - Gebze Suburban Railway
Karaköy - Beyoğlu Tunnel
Funicular Railway
Passenger Ferry
Interchange Station
T4 Mecid-i Selam
Cebaci
Sultançiftliği
Yeni Mahalle
Haci Şükrü
50 Yil-Baştabya
Cumhuriyet
Metris
Karadeniz
Taşköprü
Ali Fuat Başgil
Bosna-Çukurçeşme
Sağmalcılar
Uluyol-Bereç
Rami
Topçular
Demirkapı
Edirnekapı
Piyer Loti
Eyüp
4 Levent
1 Levent
Gayrettepe
Şişli-Mecidiyeköy
Osmanbey-Pangaltı
Maçka Parkı
Harbiye Parkı
Beşiktaş
BOSPHORUS
GOLDEN HORN
Taksim
Ağa Camii
Galtasaray
Odakule
Tünel
Beyoğlu
Karaköy
Kabataş
Fındıklı
Tophane
Üsküdar
Harem
Haydarpaşa
Söğütlüçeşme
Kadiköy
Kadiköy-Moda Tramway
Kızıltoprak
Feneryolu
Göztepe
Erenköy
Suadiye
Bostancı
Küçükyalı
İdealtepe
Gebze
Osmangazi
Fatih
Tuzla
İçme
Aydıntepe
Güzelyalı
Tersane
Kaynarca
Pendik
Yunus
Kartal
Atalar
Cevizli
Maltepe
Süreyya Plajı
Eminönü
Sirkeci
Gülhane
Sultanahmet
Cankurtaran
Çemberlitaş
Bayazit
Kapali Çarşı
Aksaray
Láleli
Yusufpaşa
Haseki
Fındıkzade
Emniyet-Fatih
Topkapı-Ulubatlı
Bayrampasa Maltepe
Topkapı
Pazartekke
Çapa
Şehremini
Cevislibağ AOY
Merkezefendi
Seyitnizam
Akşemsettin
Sağmalcılar
Kartaltepe-Kocatepe
Esenler
Otogar (Bus Station)
Terazidere
Davutpaşa
Merter
Güngören
Kerestecíler
Mehmet Akif
Mithatpaşa
Zeytinburnu
Bağcılar
Güneştepe
Yavuz Selim
Soğanlı
Akıncılar
Bahçelievler
Ataköy Şirinevler
Bakirköy İncirli
Yenibosna
DTM-İstanbul Fuar Merkezi
Havalimani (Airport)
Florya
Menekşe
Yeşilköy
Yeşilyurt
Bakirköy
Yeni Manhalle
Zeytinburnu
Kazliçeşme
Yedikule
Koca Mustafa Paşa
Yenikapı
Kumkapı
Halkalı
Kanaraya
Soğusku
Küçükçekmece
SEA OF MARMARA

EYÜP
Eyüp Camii
Tombs of Sokollu Mehmet Paşa and Siyavus Paşa
Defterdar Ferry Terminal
NISANCA
Ayvansaray Ferry Terminal
Rahmi M. Koç Industrial Museum
Hasköy Ferry Terminal
Anemas Zindanları
AYVANSARAY
Ivaz Efendi Camii
Eğrikapı
Old Galata Bridge
HASKÖY
Haliç Parkı
Balat Ferry Terminal
Zindan Arkası Cemetery
KASIMPAŞA
Tekfur Sarayı
Surp Hreşdagabet
BALAT
Ahrida
St Stephen of the Bulgars
GOLDEN HORN
Erdinekapı Cemetery
Erdine Kapi
Kariye Museum
Fener Ferry Terminal
Greek Orthodox Patriarchate
Kasımpaşa Ferry Terminal
Hasanpaşa Parkı
Mihrimah Camii
Fethiye Camii
Ayakapı Ferry Terminal
VEFA
Yavuz Selim Camii
Cibali Ferry Terminal
EDİRNEKAPI
Vefa Stadium
Gül Camii
Topkapı Cemetery
ULUBATLI / TOPKAPI
Kadir Has University
ATATÜRK BRIDGE
SULUKULE
FATIH
Zeyrek Camii
Topkapı
TOPKAPI
Capa Hospital
Fatih Camii
ZEYREK
SÜLEYMANIYE
Rüstem Paşa Camii
Aqueduct of Valens
Süleymaniye Camii
PAZARTEKKE
EMNIYET FATIH
CAPA
Arkeoloji Parkı
Saraçhane Parkı
Mevlane Kapi
FINDIKZADE
HASEKI
AKSARAY
Istanbul Municipal Building
Istanbul University
Kapalı Çarşı (Grand Bazaar)
Çurkur Bostan
Haseki Hospital
YUSUFPAŞA
Valide Camii
Laleli Camii
LALELI
ÜNIVERSITE
BEYAZIT
Beyazit Camii
Mesipaşa Camii
Silivri Kapı
Hekimoğlu Ali Paşa Camii
Haseki Camii
Cerrahpasa Hospital
Yenikapı Station
Ramazan Efendi Camii
Surp Asdvadzazsin
Kumkapı Station
KUMKAPI
Koca Mustafa Paşa Camii
Kumkapı Harbour
Yenikapı Ferry Terminal
Yenikapı Parkı
Koca Mustafa Paşa Station
İmrahor Camii
Land Walls of Theodosius II
YEDIKULE
Yedikule Kapı
Yedikule Museum
Yedikule Station

OSMANBEY PANGALTI
Military Museum
Harbiye Parkı
HARBIYE
Arial Tramway
MAÇKA
Demokrasi Parkı
Istanbul Teknik University
TAKSIM
Taksim Parkı
Istanbul Teknik University
TAKSIM
TAKSIM SQUARE
GALATASARAY
Ağa Camii
Atatürk Cultural Centre
CIHANGIR
KABATAS
GALATASARAY
Galatasaray Lycée
Kasımpaşa Stadium
ÇUKURCUMA
Pera Museum
French Palace
FINDIKLI
BEYOĞLU
TOPHANE
St Mary Draperis
TÜNEL
GALATA
TOPHANE
Kılıç Ali Paşa Camii
Nusretiye Camii
Istanbul Modern
Arap Camii
Galata Tower
KARAKÖY
Yeraltı Camii
KARAKÖY/GALATA
Karaköy Ferry Terminal
Bus Station
Yeni Camii
EMINÖNÜ
Saraybumu Parkı
Atatürk Monument
Misir Çarşısı
Sirkeci Station
Goth's Column
EMINÖNÜ
Gülhane Parkı
Topkapı Palace
Archeology Museum
Vilayet Binasi
GÜLHANE
Yerebatan Sarnıcı
Aya Irene
Ahirkapi Lighthouse
ÇEMBERLITAS
Aya Sofya
SULTANAHMET
Museum of Turkish & Islamic Art
Sultanahmet Camii (Blue Mosque)
CANKURTARAN
Cankurtaran Station
Sokollu Mehmet Paşa Camii
Küçük Ayasofya Camii
Palace of Bucoleon
see 'The Old City' map
see 'Across the Golden Horn' map
YILDIZ
Yıldız Parkı
ÇIRAĞAN
BEŞIKTAŞ
Maritime Museum
Bosphorus Cruise
Dolmabahçe Palace
DOLMABAHÇE
Inönü Stadium
BOSPHORUS
KABATAŞ
Mihrimah Camii
Üsküdar Ferry Terminal
Şemsih Paşa Camii
ÜSKÜDAR
Yani Valide Camii
Kız Kulesi
Salacak Ferry Terminal
HAREM
Selimiye Parkı
SEA OF MARMARA
N
0
500m
İSTANBUL


Kadir Has University
ATATÜRK BRIDGE
GOLDEN HORN
FATİH
ZEYREK
SÜLEYMANIYE
KUMKAPI
Eski Imareti Camii
Fatih Camii
Zeyrek Camii
Tomb of Mimar Sinan
Rüstem Paşa Camii
Süleymaniye Camii
Süleymaniye Library
Museum of Caricatures
Aquaduct of Valens
Saraçhane Parkı
Arkeoloji Park
Şehzade Camii
İstanbul Municipal Building
Kalenderhane Camii
İstanbul University
Beyazit Kulesi
Beyazit Camii
Kapalı Çarşi (Grand Bazaar)
Valide Camii
Laleli Camii
İstanbul University (Faculty of Science & Literature)
Mesipaşa Camii
Yenikapı Station
Surp Asdvadzasin
Havaş Airport Bus Stop
Kumkapı Station
Yenikapı Parkı
Yenikapı Ferry Terminal
Kumkapı Harbour
AKSARAY
LALELI
ÜNIVERSITE
BEYAZIT
YENIÇERILER
ATATÜRK BULVARI
ORDU CAD
SEHZADEBAŞI CAD
MUSTAFA KEMAL CAD
KENNEDY CADDESI
Ferries to Yalova (Termal & İznik)

THE OLD CITY
N
Arap Camii
BAKALAR CAD
KEMERALTI CAD
KARAKÖY
KEMANKEŞ CAD
TERSANE CAD
KARAKÖY/GALATA
KARAKÖY CAD
Yeraltı Camii
RIHTIM CAD
Karaköy Ferry Terminal
GALATA BRIDGE
Bus Station
KENNEDY CAD
KALOYN SOK
TAHMIS CAD
Yeni Camii
EMİNÖNÜ
Atatürk Monument
Sarayburnu Parkı
KENNEDY CADDESİ
Mısır Çarşısı (Spice Bazaar)
YENI CAMI CAD
HAMIDIYE CAD
BÜYÜK POSTAHANE CAD
İSTOSYON YOLU
Sirkeci Station
ASIREFENDI CAD
ANKARA CAD
MURADIYE HUDAVI CAD
EMİNÖNÜ
Goth's Column
Gülhane Parkı
Museum of Turkish Ceramics
Topkapı Palace
EBUSUD CAD
Vilayet Binası
ÇAKIR AĞA CAD
SULTAN MEHMET SOK
FERDİ GÖKÇAY SOK
TÜRKOCAĞI CAD
HÜKÜMET KONAĞI SK
Museum of the Ancient Orient
Archeology Museum
GÜLHANE
TAŞVIR SOK
SEREF EFE SOK
NURUOSMANIYE CAD
KAZIM ISMAIL
MOLLA FENARI SOK
Darphane
Aya Irene
Ahirkapi Lighthouse
Yareba Camii
GURKAN YEREBATAN CAD
ALEMDAR CAD
ÇAYIRLI SOK
SOĞUKÇEŞME SOK
Column of Constantine
VEZIRHANI
BABIALI CAD
Aya Sofya
Yerebatan Sarnıcı
DIVAN YOLU CAD
ÇEMBERLITAŞ
PERTEVNIYAL SOK
SULTANAHMET
Binbirdirek Sarnıcı
AYASOFYA MEYD
BABIHUMAYUN CAD
KÜÇÜKAYASOFYA CAD
Ahmet III Fountain
GEDIK PAŞA CAMI SOK
HAMAMI SOK
PIYER LOTI CAD
Museum of Turkish & Islamic Art
KABASAKAL CAD
CANKURTARAN
DIZDARIYE ÇEŞMESI SOK
TERZIHANE S
ATMEYDANI SOK
HIPPODROME (ATMEYDANI)
Sultanahmet Camii (Blue Mosque)
KUTLUŞAN SOK
Cankurtaran Station
AKBIYIK CAD
Sokollu Mehmet Paşa Camii
SULTANAZI SOK
UÇLER S
ÇARŞISI
TAVUKHANE SOK
ARASTA SOK
Mosaic Museum
AKBIYIK C
AMIRAL TAFDIL SOK
CANKURTARAN CAD
Küçük Ayasofya Camii
KALEIÇI SOK
NAKILBENT
GELIŞIM S
AKBIYIK DEĞIRMENI S
AHIR KAPI SOK
EFENDI KAPI S
OYUNCU SOK
AKSAKAL SOK
MEYD ARKASI SOK
Palace of Bucoleon
KENNEDY CADDESI (SAHIL YOLU)
SEA OF MARMARA
0
250 m

OSMANBEY PANGALTI
Military Museum
Harbiye Parkı
Harbiye Open-Air Theatre
Arial Tramway
MAÇKA
Dolmabahçe Palace
DOLMABAHÇE
Kenter Theatre
İstanbul Radyoevi
Demokrasi Parkı
Inönü Stadium
HARBIYE
Maçka Parkı
Istanbul Teknik University
Istanbul Teknik University
KABATAS
Atatürk Cultural Centre
Taksim Parkı
Funicular
TAKSIM
TAKSIM SQUARE
KABATAŞ
French Consulate
Aksanat Cultural Centre
Aya Triada
Ağa Camii
CIHANGİR
German Hospital
FINDIKLI
Taksim Hospital
Surp Asdvadzadzin
GALATASARAY
Balık Pazarı
Çiçek Pasajı
Galatasaray Lycée
GALATASARAY
British Consulate
St Antoine
French Palace
ÇUKURCUMA
TOPHANE
Nusretiye Camii
Palais de Hollande
Italian Consulate
TOPHANE
Nargile Cafés
İstanbul Modern
Kasımpaşa Stadium
Pera Museum
BEYOĞLU
St Mary Draperis
Kılıç Ali Paşa Camii
KASIMPAŞA
Botter House
Crimean Memorial Church
Turkish Orthodox Church of Panghia
TÜNEL
Tünel (Istiklal)
Galata Mevlevihanesi
GALATA
Galata Tower
Cruiseship Terminal
Hasanpaşa Parkı
KARAKÖY
Yeraltı Camii
British Prison
Minerva Building
Kasımpaşa Ferry Terminal
Church of St Peter and St Paul
Jewish Museum
Karaköy Ferry Terminal
KARAKÖY/GALATA
Arap Camii
Tünel (Karaköy)
GOLDEN HORN
Azaz Kapı Camii
ATATÜRK BRIDGE
GALATA BRIDGE
N
0
250 m
ACROSS THE GOLDEN HORN

# About the author

**Terry Richardson** is based in the Mediterranean Turkish city of Antalya. He first visited İstanbul in 1978, and has been an author of the *Rough Guide to Turkey* for over a decade. He writes regular travel features for an English-language Turkish newspaper, leads history/archeology tours and was involved in setting up two marked long-distance walking trails in Turkey. When not researching, travelling or climbing snow-capped peaks, he's likely to be listening to punk/alternative music or following the fluctuating fortunes of Middlesbrough FC on the web.

## Author Picks

**Throughout this book, we've used the Rough Guides icon to highlight establishments our authors particularly recommend – a perfectly sited hotel, an atmospheric café, a special restaurant. Each has been sent a "Rough Guides Recommends" logo to display on their website. The same icon is also used to flag up book recommendations in the Contexts section. Please send us your own nominations, which our authors will be happy to check out for future editions.**

**Above:** Spice Bazaar © Roger d'Olivere Mapp/RoughGuides
**Front cover:** Blue Mosque © Johanna Huber/4cornersimages
**Back cover:** Food stall © PCL/Alamy

**"The most accessible guidebooks in print today."**
*The Independent*

**"Good on local culture . . . fun and sprightly."**
*Hemispheres*, in-flight magazine of United Airlines

**EXPLORE** every corner of İstanbul, using the clearest maps of any guide.

**CHOOSE** where to go and what to see, inspired by dozens of photos.

**READ** expert background on everything from Ottoman architecture to bar-hopping in Beyoğlu.

**RELY** on our selection of the best places to stay, eat and party, for every budget.

**MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR TIME ON EARTH™**

OTHER ROUGH GUIDES INCLUDE:

www.roughguides.com

MAP

GUIDEBOOK

PHRASEBOOK

Published by Rough Guides
Distributed by The Penguin Group